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Why More Battleships?

The role in which we like President Roosevelt least is as devotee of big battleships—a passion that goes back to his days as Assistant Secretary of the Navy under President Wilson, and his lifelong avocation as a sailor. In our opinion this personal enthusiasm of the President has far more to do with present American naval policy than most people realize. In his message to Congress on January 3 he again hinted that we must have a large increase in our navy, and congressional supporters of this view eagerly began the attempt to carry out his wishes. At the same time, they sought to smother in committee without ever letting it come to vote in the House the Ludlow resolution under which the people as a whole would have a chance to vote on those foreign wars which the people as a whole must fight.

The present naval appropriation for the next year is close to $600,000,000. Other military expenditures are well over an additional $400,000,000. Now it is proposed to build an extra one or two battleships, one or two airplane carriers and a number of cruisers, although, as our Washington correspondent pointed out in our issue of January 5, the chiefs of the navy itself are not eager to have all this money spent, especially because obsolescence is so rapid nowadays. Our navy is already about as large as Great Britain's, although she needs ships far more than we do. Any naval expert will tell you that in character of vessels and in number, it is intended not merely to defend our shores, but to fight in any part of the world. If some situation has arisen requiring this sudden great increase in our naval strength, neither the President nor anyone else has said what it is. In sober fact, the navy makes the foreign policy. We should like to see these roles reversed, so that the country first decided upon its policy and the navy was then shaped in accordance with that decision.

Fascism Comes to Rumania

The advent of a fascist regime in Rumania is an event of great importance for all Europe. It definitely adds another to the group of totalitarian states and correspondingly weakens the democratic bloc. In the national election, the Liberals, headed by Premier George Tatarescu, led the balloting with 38.5 percent of the vote. The National Peasant Party came next with 19.5 percent and the Nationalist Iron Guard received about 16.5 percent. The anti-Semitic, pro-Nazi Christian Front of Octavian Goga and Professor A. C. Cuga got only 9 percent. Nevertheless, King Carol defied the electoral result and made Goga premier. If he remains in office, we may expect to see a recapitulation of recent German history. Anti-Semitism, already powerful in Rumania, will be fanned to even greater excesses. Already, there are reports that many wealthy Jews have fled the country. The French showed a realistic understanding of the situation when they promptly clapped an embargo on arms exports to Rumania. They do not want to increase the military strength of the Fascist bloc which is such a serious menace to themselves. Former Premier Titulescu, now in Switzerland, has offered to

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throw in his forces with the Peasant Party in opposition to Goga, but whether such a coalition would be strong enough to be effective is doubtful.

New Deal Power Policy Wins

Two decisions of the United States Supreme Court, on January 3, revealed again the change in the Court's temper since the President's proposal last year. One of these cases, that of the Pacific Gas and Electric Company of California, is interpreted as opening the door to rates based upon the "prudent investment" theory, without consideration of reproduction cost. Such rates might easily result in saving many millions of dollars annually to the consumer. In two other unanimous decisions, the Court rejected the efforts of the Alabama Power Company, and of the Duke interests, to halt the government's policy of lending money under the PWA to municipalities with which to erect their own electric-light plants. The cases have long been pending, and in the meantime appropriations of about $110,000,000, for sixty-one projects in twenty-five states, have been held up. These can now go forward, at a time when, in view of the new depression, the employment and payrolls they will provide are highly desirable. Since municipal plants almost always sell power below the rates previously charged by the private companies, and since these companies usually reduce their prices to meet the new competition, this Supreme Court decision, also, should result in saving vast sums to the consumer.

American Testimony on the Russian Purge

Some interesting testimony on what is happening in Soviet Russia is given in an article by John D. Littlepage and Demaree Bess in The Saturday Evening Post of January 1. Mr. Littlepage, an experienced mining engineer specializing in gold mining, worked in Russia for ten years. As a result of his decade in the USSR he believes that most of the men executed, imprisoned or exiled for sabotage are guilty. "Industrial sabotage is a commonplace," he reports, and says that it "often bears strong evidence of being directed and organized in high places." Much of it "could hardly have been possible without the participation of important communist managers." He believes there is an underground civil war going on between two important groups of communist leaders. "The ruling communist group has been a long time getting around to the discovery that other communists are the most dangerous enemies they have. . . . A tremendous conspiracy has developed among the communists themselves. . . . The 'outs' among the communists have conspired to overthrow the 'ins' and have resorted to underground conspiracy and industrial sabotage because they had no legitimate means of waging a political struggle under the Soviet system." He describes how a group sent to Germany to buy mining machinery purchased inferior goods at high prices and, with the bribes paid by the German manufacturers, set up a reserve fund presumably used for conspiratorial purposes. Mr. Littlepage's article is strong testimony against the theory that all the Russian trials have been mere frame-ups. It is not, however, cheerful reading for the friends of the socialist experiment in the USSR—which is probably why The Post printed it. For if Mr. Littlepage is right, dissident elements have been, and perhaps still are, so numerous and so embittered that their existence must throw doubt on the wisdom of recent policy.

Counting the Unemployed

The extreme severity of our present unemployment problem has been brought out by the results of the national census in which 7,800,000 people voluntarily registered as members of the jobless ranks. This figure indicates that there are probably at least 12,000,000 unemployed workers in the United States today. A numerical count of a large cross-section of the population showed that only 72 percent of the actual unemployed have registered in the census and, taking 7,800,000 as 72 percent of the jobless, the total figure must be nearly 11,000,000. To that we must add the people—in all likelihood at least a million more—who have been forced to join the unemployed during the time that has elapsed since the census was undertaken. The approximate determination of the number of jobless workers in the United States is certainly an extremely valuable piece of work. We regret, however, that a more accurate method of counting the unemployed was not used. Even if the method is not to be improved upon, we are completely in favor of Mr. John D. Biggers' recommendation that the census be taken again and frequently in the future. Certainly an important early step in solving the unemployment problem is to examine its nature and its size.

The ASU Meets

More than 500 students from colleges all over the country met at Vassar College during the Christmas vacation for the third annual conference of the American Student Union. The purpose of the meeting was to elect new officers and national committeemen for 1938 and to formulate a series of resolutions which, in a loose way, are intended to represent the ASU's collective point of view toward world affairs. The convention almost came a cropper over the question of neutrality, the topic that aroused the most heated and lengthy discussion. The split in the ranks of the convention delegates mirrored the division of opinion that exists among progressive groups throughout the United States: between the advocates of strict neutrality on one hand and, on the other, those who favor American participation in collective efforts to stop the aggression of the Fascist powers. When the final vote was taken it was the latter point of view, endorsed by the leading figures in the ASU's national organization, that was adopted, along with resolutions opposing the United States' military budget and the other preparations for war that are going on at the present time.

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Brother, Can You Spare $85,000,000?

Cuba's dictatorial government, ruled by Colonel Fulgencio Batista, is attempting to float a bond issue of $85,000,000 in the United States, the issue to mature in 1977. In 1929—which should be recent enough to be remembered—when Machado was ruling Cuba, he obtained a loan of $80,000,000 from bankers in New York to help defray the expenses of his regime. By 1933 the bonds were in default and an investigation by the United States Senate had exposed the part that capital from the United States played in maintaining the Machado machine in power. Forty millions of that 1929 issue are in circulation; the remaining forty millions are in the hands of the Chase National Bank as collateral for a $20,000,000 debt. The new issue—if it can be made successfully—will be used as a substitute for the old bonds. To ensure its success the Batista government has been carrying on an advertising campaign to persuade public opinion in the United States that Cuba is a fine, safe place to make investments. One effort in the promotion scheme was the special section of The New York Herald Tribune for Sunday, November 21, which was printed as a news supplement but was in fact no more than an advertising booklet. The drive to establish good will with the United States and thereby obtain money from her bankers is being waged with a great deal of energy and no small amount of skill. Nevertheless we find it hard to believe that any reputable firm will fall again into the mistake of lending money to Cuba's dictator-for-the-moment.

Franco the Civilizer

General Franco, who is so anxious to receive belligerent rights from the United States and Great Britain, is taking a peculiar course to curry favor. His government has recently sentenced to prison two American citizens—Antonio Fernandez Villa to twenty years and his wife to twelve—for no discoverable offense whatever. They had been living in Majorca since 1932, Mr. Villa having chosen this spot, popular with Americans, as a good place to recover from a serious illness. When the United States government evacuated other citizens from this rebel base, Mr. and Mrs. Villa had already been arrested. For some reason they had fallen under suspicion of being hostile to Franco, though it is impossible to discover what law, if any, they had violated. Since their arrest the State Department has been attempting to obtain their release, so far vainly. A petition signed by more than four hundred university teachers (Mr. Villa's brother being Professor Pedro Villa Fernandez of the Spanish department of New York University) stimulated the Department to intensive action. It is important that the case not be lost and forgotten in the mazes of diplomacy, and the National Committee for the Defense of People's Rights, 156 Fifth Avenue, New York City, is therefore assembling names for further petitions. Anyone interested may add his signature by writing the Committee. A word from the American Catholics who are so sure Franco is a civilizing influence would be appropriate in this instance.

Orchid for Look

Look, the most sensational recent success of the magazine-publishing field, is publishing in its next few issues a remarkable series of photographs exposing the methods of the war propagandists. It has taken each of the stock devices used to goad men into war hysteria and, by comparing the idealized poster with the savage reality, shows the complete falseness of the appeal. Mutilated babies, outraged womanhood, the "worthy purpose," the "God is with us" claim, mistreatment of prisoners, the "war is glamorous" myth: all are exposed as the stock-in-trade lies of the propagandists. The picture series illustrates the use of their appeal during the World War, the Spanish civil war and the Sino-Japanese conflict. It was not so long ago that The New Republic commented favorably on the treatment Look gave to the question of civil liberties in the United States. We hasten to allay any suspicions that The New Republic is being suborned by the Cowles family of Des Moines, owners of Look. It is a significant and encouraging note, we feel, when a high-power "slick" devotes itself to editorial pictures of this admirable type.

Nostalgic Note

Two children in Indiana recently became the parents of an illegitimate baby, and a good many newspapers thereupon smeared their names and pictures all over the front pages, humiliating their parents and stigmatizing the children in a way that will not be forgotten for many years. . . . We can remember away back when even journalists were sometimes gentlemen.

News Notes of a Week

In the Sino-Japanese war the Japanese advance continued. The Chinese in Canton prepared to destroy their city by fire rather than have it fall intact into Japanese hands in the anticipated invasion of Kwangtung. While the Japanese in Shantung were engaged in consolidating their position, Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek resigned as China's Premier in favor of H. H. Kung, for the announced purpose of unifying China's defenses. . . . The tremendous battle on the Spanish war front just north of Teruel continued with the Loyalist forces still apparently in command of the city. One definite result of the government's counter-offensive has been the delay, if not the abandonment, of the Rebels' over-publicized plans for a knockout blow. . . . The negotiations between Mexico and the United States for an oil agreement satisfactory to both nations reached a stalemate when President Cárdenas announced the abrogation of existing major pacts.

At home the business index continued its downward trend despite the flurry of New Year's busi-

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ness surveys in the press which stressed heavily all available hopeful notes. . . . President Roosevelt, by an executive order, reduced the ridiculously high price of silver to a figure not quite so unreasonable but still higher than it should be. . . . The General Motors Company announced the immediate firing of 30,000 men and the reduction of the remaining 205,000 employees to a three-day, twenty-four-hour week because of the decline in sales. . . . The Ford Motor Company filed a petition asking for a rehearing of the NLRB finding that the company had violated the Wagner Labor Relations Act.

Mr. Roosevelt's Counter-Offensive

THE PRESIDENT'S message to Congress comes at a critical moment in the fortunes of the New Deal and of the country's future. It is to be understood in terms, not of the logic expressed in its words, but of its place in a political warfare of maneuver and position. As such it is the culmination of a brilliant piece of strategy, and may have a pronounced effect on the temper of the country and the action of the national legislature.

The background of this new strategy is a long and ragged retreat on the part of the administration's forces. The Court plan was successful in changing the views of the Court on constitutional issues, but its defeat in Congress split the Democrats and gave renewed hope to the conservatives of both parties. Congress was all ready to balk the administration on every point, and the President's leadership was badly damaged. Then came the new depression and, with it, the first major offensive of the anti-New Deal forces since the 1936 election. The President was blamed for the decline in production and employment, on the ground that he had destroyed business confidence, discouraged investment and given a free rein to labor. In the special session not a single measure for which Congress was called together was passed; on the contrary, it seemed to be moving toward reducing taxes on profits, and a general assault on New Deal laws disliked by business. If nothing were done before the new session convened, the retreat might be turned into a rout.

In this situation Mr. Roosevelt called out his artillery and unexpectedly laid a hot barrage on the enemy front line at its weakest points. Assistant Attorney General Robert H. Jackson, an exceedingly shrewd student of affairs and a forceful speaker, counter-attacked on one flank by pointing out the price increases in monopolistic industries which had diminished demand, and said in no uncertain terms that the price-raisers themselves were responsible for the slump. The facts to which he pointed were true and could not be denied; his inference was at least reasonable. His second salvo raised the issue of a strike of capital. This was not an allegation but merely a suggestion; it served the purpose, however, of putting the enemy on the defensive. Financial and business spokesmen were kept busy denying that they had consciously intended to restrict investment—although their demands on government had implied that they did have conscious control of the situation, since they had said that if government would reassure them they would go ahead and invest. Then came the fire of Secretary Ickes on the other flank, dramatizing again the concentration of wealth in this country by referring to the "sixty families" described in Ferdinand Lundberg's book, and pointing out that they were the chief opponents of progressive measures. These speeches served to rally the huge popular support of the administration, which, though temporarily uncertain, had previously been demonstrated on the occasion of every election.

After this preparation, the enemy's lines were so shaken and confused that the President's message seemed like a document of calm statesmanship. With his opponents already in retreat, enough ground was clear for him to mop up and reorganize his positive program. At the beginning of the message was the appeal to unity and patriotism in the maintenance of peace and the preparation against foreign aggressors. Then came the pleas for enlargement and stabilization of farm income, the increase of industrial mass purchasing power, and enlargement of the national income as a whole. In all this he allayed fears by stressing the necessity for interdependence and coöperation among sectional groups, factions and economic classes, and by expressing a determination both to relieve unemployment and to balance the budget without additional taxation as soon as it could be done through restoration of prosperity. He expressed favor for minor modifications of profits taxes, without abandoning the principles behind them or decreasing the yield. He referred again to the need for stimulating construction. And he attempted to divide the opposition by pointing out that the attack on monopolistic and destructive business practices was an attack not on business as a whole but merely on a guilty minority. He foreshadowed a new program of restriction of these practices.

It remains to be seen whether this brilliant strategy will make possible the new legislation that the President wants. Politically speaking, the outlook seems more hopeful now than for many months. But if one assesses the administration's program as a really effective attempt to modify the business practices which have led both to the political crisis and the economic breakdown, less optimism is justified. The price and production policies of heavy industry and other monopolistic business will not easily be changed. Their influence over public opinion and political forces remains potentially enormous. The recent campaign may turn out to be a notable victory in its own terms, but the terrain on which it was fought is still far from the centers of capitalistic power.

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The Railroads Go on the Dole

A MAN caught getting government relief money illegally is stricken from the relief rolls, lectured by a judge and sent to jail, and the newspaper account of his offense is read in well-to-do circles as proof that government relief to the impoverished is full of graft. Yet corporate interests which have borrowed millions of dollars of relief funds illegally have been welcomed back for more loans, and the newspapers are told that the additional grants are being made in order to "promote recovery." This is especially pertinent now, when relief for individuals has already been cut and is threatened with still further cuts, and when, on the other hand, the policy of relief loans to railroad corporations is being revived.

This policy was employed in 1932, when the banks were in no position to lend to the railroads. It was predicated on the theory that temporary loans would enable sound companies to recover their balance and carry on. But the Interstate Commerce Commission and the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, entrusted for this purpose by Congress with the administration of hundreds of millions of dollars, lent some of the money to tottering railroads, unsoundly capitalized, in need of reorganization, not capable of being cured by a government shot-in-the-arm. A dozen of the bigger railroads, for whom receivership was virtually inescapable, first borrowed $150,000,000 of the relief funds, and then failed. Congress meanwhile tried to end a practice so unsound both for the government and for the railroads, by forbidding loans to roads that were in need of reorganization. The two official agencies respected this congressional prohibition in some cases and evaded it in others. Now, after an intervening lull, each of them has just given evidence that it is ready once more to circumvent the law of the land.

A few weeks ago Jesse Jones, head of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, told the reporters that it was going to lend more money to the railroads. But a few days later Mortimer N. Buckner, head of the New York Trust Company, contact man between Wall Street and Jesse Jones, made one of those faux pas for which he is becoming famous in Washington. He testified before a Senate committee that the present state of affairs is very different from that which led to the creation of the government's lending policy, that the banks now have excess funds for which they are unable to find borrowers, and that a railroad which is able to meet the requirements fixed by Congress as a necessary condition to a government loan can borrow from the banks.

Since the law forbids government loans to corporations able to borrow elsewhere, the inference from Buckner's testimony was clear that a railroad applying for government money at the present time is unable to comply with the conditions imposed by banks—and therefore with the similar conditions imposed by Congress—and that the Commission and the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, if they grant such a loan, will be disregarding a congressional statute they are sworn to obey. Buckner's frankness was supported by another banker, Fairman Dick, financial expert of the American Railroad Association. Dick's testimony showed that, though the government advances millions of dollars of relief funds on the Commission's certificate that borrowing corporations are sound in wind and limb, he as a banker would not let a client buy securities in reliance on such a Commission certificate.

Pursuant to the revived, unregenerate policy, the Commission, just before the turn of the year, approved a loan to the overcapitalized, debt-ridden, shaky Erie Railroad, a subsidiary of the Alleghany holding company. One of the Commissioners publicly refused to sign the necessary certificate that the road is not in need of reorganization. The Commission's action was even more dubious in the light of the disclosures Senator Wheeler has been making in his railroad investigation. He has produced bundles of evidence indicating that the Alleghany holding-company system had already, by using two of the roads it controls, obtained loans from the government through fraud. The Commission apparently concluded that the law made such illegality no bar to future loans. The Reconstruction Finance Corporation, like the Commission, has also shown ability to put on blinders which shut out both such distressing facts and the law passed by Congress. If the Erie gets the millions it is seeking, the lame, the halt and the blind among the railroads will have full notice that they can put off still longer the trip to the reorganization hospital, as required by law, and can partake once more of the free lunch provided by the Commission and the Finance Corporation in defiance of the law. The reported purpose is to bring happy times back again.

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What About Mexico?

IS MEXICO really Red? Will it go fascist in six months? Are the Mexican people opposed to President Cárdenas? Will Mexico be another Spain? These are not uncommon or idle questions today, however misleading some of them may be. They reflect the profound changes that Mexico has undergone during the past three years, the rapid tempo of her transformation and a growing awareness north of the Rio Grande that Mexico is not merely a foreign social laboratory, but an increasingly vital factor in the affairs of the Western Hemisphere.

Since Mexico is primarily a country of land-hungry peasants and of vast feudal estates where primitive methods of agriculture still prevail, the agrarian policy of the Cárdenas regime is the surest measure of its sincerity and its popular backing.

General Lázaro Cárdenas has just completed the first half of his six-year term as Mexico's chief executive. During this brief period, some twenty-five million acres, more than all the land distributed in nearly two decades following the revolution, have been expropriated for the benefit of more than 500,000 landless peasants. These figures are more eloquent than a dozen essays on the political philosophy of the present Mexican government. They reveal that the first serious and effective attempts to destroy Mexico's semi-feudal system of economy are now under way. They are also the most convincing indication that the government of President Cárdenas is truly progressive and popular.

There is another aspect of Mexico's rejuvenated agrarian reform that is of great significance. Those who fought for "land and liberty" during the revolution, the framers of the Constitution of 1917 and the radical idealists of the early twenties, all envisaged a free Mexico of small, independent farmers engaged in what would essentially amount to subsistence agriculture. Indeed, practically all land taken over by peasants in those days has been farmed in small individual lots grouped together in village communal associations, known as *ejidos*.

The defenders of the old plantation system were able to point out that the new class of petty landholders were in dire straits, that they produced wretched crops and that Mexico's revolutionary land policy was leading the nation's agriculture and its economy toward certain disaster. They conveniently forgot, however, that as a rule only the poorer lands were given to the peasants, that they lacked water, and that even though absolutely destitute, they were left to shift for themselves, often without the most elementary agricultural implements.

Early in 1936, the Cárdenas government took the first steps to remedy this situation. It created the National Bank of Ejido Credit whose function was to supply peasant communities both with necessary credit to purchase tools, stock, good seed, etc., and with technical advice and assistance. The Bank at the same time encouraged those communities to form coöperatives as the most efficient manner of using modern agricultural machinery.

Then in the fall of that same year, President Cárdenas set a new precedent. He expropriated almost a million acres of the best cotton-growing land in the republic, a region in north-central Mexico known as the Laguna. For many years it had been a source of fabulous wealth for a handful of planters and of semi-starvation for some thirty thousand peons. With a single stroke, President Cárdenas not only settled the Laguna "problem," but also set up an experiment in large-scale, mechanized coöperative farming unparalleled this side of the Atlantic. Thirty thousand agricultural workers, who with their families make up a total population of nearly one hundred and fifty thousand people, were organized into some two hundred and eighty coöperative societies, supplied with the best American farming equipment, expert agronomists, marketing facilities, living and operating expenses until the crops were made, and a program of far-reaching economic and social development. While each coöperative is a separate unit, tilling the soil allotted to it in common, all the cooperatives are closely associated through their connections with the National Bank of Ejido Credit, the government's chief agency in this project, so that in a real sense they form a huge collective farm.

The first year of this bold venture has just ended. Everything considered, it must be counted a successful undertaking, holding still greater promise for the future. It also marks a turning point in Mexican history, for henceforth the goal of agrarian reform has definitely become the transformation of Mexico into a country of efficient, highly productive and industrialized coöperative farms. Such farms are beginning to spring up in various parts of the republic. The most important now in the process of coöperative reorganization are the henequen-growing plantations of the Yucatan, expropriated last summer—an even larger project than that of the Laguna region and of greater political significance.

Whatever industry exists in Mexico—oil, mining, electric power, telephone and telegraph, railroads and textiles—is practically all in the hands of foreign corporations, chiefly American and to a lesser extent British. With the nation's industry as well as its principal natural resources dominated by powerful capitalist interests from abroad, Mexican sovereignty has been constantly and unavoidably violated. Political scientists, in defining the true status of Mexico, refer to it as a semi-colonial country.

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No group in Mexico has better understood this situation or resented it more than the enterprising merchants, small capitalists and other wide-awake middle-class members of the population. Blocked in their ambitions to expand and develop both by an antiquated system of land tenure and foreign control of industry, they not only support the agrarian revolution but also stand firm behind a program of national economic liberation. At many points their interests coincide with those of the working class.

Partly this explains the fact that organized labor, in Mexico, now plays a political role far out of proportion to its numbers. In the struggle against foreign capitalists, it has been the more than willing ally of the progressive business men. Moreover, since the latter are only a very small if energetic group, the workers have had to bear the brunt of the fighting. Mexican labor has therefore been able to demand concessions from governments controlled by the radical middle class. As early as 1917, long before the Wagner Act became law in the United States, Mexican labor was granted the legal right to organize and bargain collectively.

The development of the labor movement was halted during the Calles regime. During the last three years, however, labor has not only resumed its march but it has been the chief prodder of the Cárdenas government. It was labor which forced the issue in the summer of 1935 when Cárdenas had to choose definitely whether or not to move on to the left. Ever since then, both labor and the government have gained in strength, but each needs the support of the other and both must have the backing of the peasants to survive.

Labor's successful drive for higher wages, social benefits and a tightly closed shop, especially its spectacular strikes against the largest foreign monopolies such as the British-owned Mexican Light and Power Company and both British and American oil companies, has had much to do with the government's stiffening attitude toward foreign property interests in Mexico. For the first time Spanish, British and American landholdings have been affected by the agrarian expropriation laws. More important still, 350,000 acres held by the Standard Oil of California have recently been nationalized. However, the government's most decisive move against American capital was to take over the National Railways, largest transportation system in the country, partly owned and actually controlled by Wall Street bankers. This railroad is now the property of the republic, but it is soon to be managed by the railroad workers themselves.

To stimulate the growth of national industry, the Cárdenas government has taken still another step that may be of the greatest consequence to Mexico. Early in September, the National Labor and Industrial Development Bank, headed by Gonzalez Aparicio, a distinguished economist, was established to supply credit to workers interested in setting up coöperative factories. One of the first acts of the new bank was to supply funds with which a number of the Laguna farm coöperatives purchased a large cotton gin, a factory for extracting cottonseed oil, an electric-power plant and other industrial equipment. The bank is also scheduled to play an important part in the development of sisal-hemp production in the henequen coöperatives of the Yucatan.

The truly remarkable achievements of the Cárdenas regime must not obscure the fact that Mexico, undoubtedly the most progressive nation in the new world, still remains a very backward and partially subject country. At least 150,000,000 acres of land remain the property of large, feudal landlords, or more than three times as much land as is cultivated by all the beneficiaries of agrarian reform. There are today approximately 2,500,000 peasants without land, or nearly double the number who have received it. The great bulk of Mexico's national wealth continues to be exploited by foreign capitalists. Their fabulous profits still go abroad while Mexico is left impoverished.

The living standards of many skilled Mexican workers resemble those of Arkansas sharecroppers. The vast majority of Mexicans exist on an even lower level, among them 2,000,000 practically unassimilated Indians who live as their forefathers did before the Spanish conquest. Disease flourishes. The rate of infantile mortality is almost three times as high as in the United States. There are only twelve cities in the whole republic with sanitary drinking water. Two-thirds of the 1,000,000 inhabitants in Mexico City, the nation's capital as well as its largest, most modern and most highly urbanized center, live in positively subhuman conditions, preyed upon by tuberculosis, typhoid, typhus and rickets.

One of the outstanding accomplishments of the Cárdenas regime has been the opening of nearly six thousand new rural schools, a 75-percent increase in three years. There are now close to three-quarters of a million children in these schools, but there are still a million and a half children of school age for whom there are no educational facilities. Secondary schools and the university are beyond the reach of all but a handful of the very well-to-do. Sixty per cent of the adult population is illiterate.

All of this means that Mexico has just begun to tackle its fundamental problems, problems which other nations settled a century and more ago. Mexico's national and industrial revolution has been so long delayed that now certain measures smacking of socialism are being applied to hasten and strengthen the process of "catching up" with the march of history. In its most important aspects, however, this process is clearly dedicated to the final accomplishment of Mexico's retarded bourgeois, democratic revolution. This more nearly than anything else describes the intrinsic nature of contemporary Mexican radicalism.

As in the past, every new advance in Mexico must be made in the face of determined and often savage resistance. While the Cárdenas government, organized labor and the peasant masses push ahead,

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the defenders of the old order grow more desperate in their efforts to preserve their power. Now that their economic position is being seriously threatened and in some cases destroyed, the reactionaries are rapidly merging their strength into a single, counter-revolutionary front.

There is hardly any doubt now that the enemies of progressive Mexico are actively preparing for the armed overthrow of the present administration. The big landlords, the most powerful foreign monopolies, the upper clergy, high officials in some of the state governments and a sprinkling of older army officers have joined hands with openly terroristic bands such as the illegal "Gold Shirts," with discredited labor leaders and pseudo-revolutionary demagogues of the Calles era, with certain Catholic student groups entrenched in the National University and with foreign fascist elements such as Nazi merchants, Spaniards sympathetic toward Franco and the like.

Taking good advantage of the freedom of the press, restored to Mexico by President Cárdenas, they are feverishly preparing the ground for more overt aggression by unleashing a sustained barrage of propaganda. The metropolitan newspapers, with the exception of the semi-official government organ, are pretty solidly reactionary and are now quite hysterical in their endeavor to undermine confidence in the government. In addition, scores of new sheets have sprung up, specializing in the vilest defamation, urging the assassination of Communists, labor leaders and government officials and openly inciting revolt. Even in the Senate, a small but vociferous band of reactionaries have started an anti-Semitic campaign, a good indication of how desperate they must be since there are less than three thousand Jewish families in all Mexico.

The political and military chief of the reactionary opposition seems to be without question General Cedillo, only a few months ago a member of the President's Cabinet. He has for many years been lord and master of the state of San Luis Potosí, where he has maintained a private army estimated at 15,000 men, a small air force and a munitions factory. By skillful maneuvering, President Cárdenas, himself a soldier, has succeeded in partially disarming him and more or less cornering him in his bailiwick. Nevertheless he remains at liberty and carries on his preparations for revolt.

Civil war is brewing in Mexico, yet it is by no means inevitable. Even if it does break out it need not resemble the conflict in Spain, though there is obviously much similarity between the situation in Mexico today and in Spain a year and a half ago. President Cárdenas, true liberal that he is, moves slowly to defend his government and even his own person. He is constantly in danger of assassination (which would be a major disaster for Mexico at this moment) but stubbornly refuses to take sufficient precautions to ensure his safety.

However, there are many important differences between the mother country and her former colony. Cárdenas is much more realistic and energetic than the liberals who were entrusted with the destiny of Spain in February, 1936. To begin with, he is himself a military man and a revolutionary fighter. He has largely transformed the Mexican army into a people's army, conscious of its duties toward the country's revolutionary program. Then again, he has had three years in which to push his reforms, build up a solid and militant mass following and consolidate the position of his government. Finally, there is another and perhaps even more significant difference: Mexico has a great ten-year revolution immediately behind her. The Mexican people are seasoned fighters and they have already gone far towards achieving unity.

Much, of course, depends on the international situation. Mexico's southern neighbor is Guatemala, a feudal-military dictatorship now on very cordial terms with Germany. At the present moment, arms are being smuggled across the frontier into Mexico. Guatemala is very plainly being groomed to play the role of Portugal, and there are well founded rumors that a plan now exists whereby at a given moment Mexico's southern border states will secede and be annexed to Guatemala. What makes all of this very serious is that the Nazis, among the original backers of the outlawed "Gold Shirts," are now intimately connected with (and very likely are even directing) most of the machinations against the Mexican government. With a good foothold in South America, the new fascist triple alliance is now seeking to gain important positions in North America.

Of all the Latin American countries, Mexico represents the greatest obstacle to the ambitions of international fascism in the new world. By her actions at Geneva and by her open and frank support of Loyalist Spain, even to the extent of shipping arms, Mexico is also the most serious foreign menace to the dictatorships which now rule almost all Hispanic America. The CTM, for example, has just issued a call to all labor organizations and democratic parties throughout Latin America to attend an anti-fascist congress in Mexico City. Political refugees have flocked there. It has become a center from which progressive ideas radiate to the far corners of Central and South America.

Undoubtedly, the most important international factor affecting Mexico is the United States. While the Roosevelt administration has been distinctly friendly toward the Cárdenas government and has discouraged efforts by some of our "economic royalists" and various Catholic organizations to intervene in the internal affairs of our southern neighbor, the enemies of progressive Mexico are powerful and in a crisis could exert tremendous pressure against the Cárdenas regime.

The steady growth of German and Japanese influence, both economic and political, in Latin America, may lead to a more friendly attitude on the part of American big business. Progressive Americans, nevertheless, would do well to be on guard against

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any effort to create an unfriendly attitude on the part of the American people and their government toward Mexico. In addition to what the Mexican people are doing to defend themselves against their own reactionaries allied with foreign fascism, there is no more effective way to prevent Mexico from becoming another Spain than to give the instigators of civil war a clear understanding that if the legitimate government of Mexico is attacked, it will receive every aid lawfully due a friendly and legally established government from the United States.

MAURICE HALPERIN.

Hemingway Reports Spain

During most of the past twelve months, Ernest Hemingway has been reporting the Spanish war for the North American Newspaper Alliance. As we did in our issue of May 5, 1937, we present below selected passages from several of his recent dispatches. They have already been printed in various newspapers affiliated with the Alliance, but such publication has often been incomplete because of lack of space.—THE EDITORS.

On the Aragon Front

WHEN WE got up with the Americans they were lying under some olive trees along a little stream. The yellow dust of Aragon was blowing over them, over their blanketed machine guns, over their automatic rifles and their anti-aircraft guns. It blew in blinding clouds raised by the hooves of pack animals and the wheels of motor transports.

But in the lee of the stream-bank, the men were slouching fearful and grinning, their teeth flashing white slits in their yellow-powdered faces.

Since I had seen them last spring, they have become soldiers. The romantics have pulled out, the cowards have gone home along with the badly wounded. The dead, of course, aren't there. Those who are left are tough, with blackened matter-of-fact faces, and, after seven months, they know their trade.

They have fought with the first Spanish troops of the new government army, captured the strongly fortified heights and town of Quinto in a brilliantly conceived and executed fashion, and have taken part with three Spanish brigades in the final storming of Belchite after it had been surrounded by Spanish troops.

After the taking of Quinto, they had marched twenty miles across country to Belchite. They had lain in the woods outside the town and had worked their way forward with the Indian-fighting tactics that are still the most life-saving that any infantry can know. Covered by a heavy and accurate artillery barrage, they stormed the entry to the town. Then for three days they fought from house to house, from room to room, breaking walls with pickaxes, bombing their way forward as they exchanged shots with the retreating Fascists from street corners, windows, rooftops and holes in the walls.

Finally, they made a juncture with Spanish troops advancing from the other side and surrounded the cathedral, where 400 men of the town garrison still held out. These men fought desperately, bravely, and a Fascist officer worked a machine gun from the tower until a shell crumpled the masonry spire upon him and his gun. They fought all around the square, keeping up a covering fire with automatic rifles, and made a final rush on the tower. Then, after some fighting of the sort you never know whether to classify as hysterical or the ultimate in bravery, the garrison surrendered.

Robert Merriam, former California University professor and chief of staff of the Fifteenth Brigade, was the leader in the final assault. Unshaven, his face smoke-blackened, his men tell how he bombed his way forward, wounded six times slightly by hand-grenade splinters in his hands and face, but refusing to have his wounds dressed until the cathedral was taken. The American casualties were 23 killed and 60 wounded out of a total of 500 of all ranks who took part in the two operations.

The total government casualties given in the entire offensive were 2,000 killed and wounded. The entire garrison of 3,000 troops in Belchite was either captured or killed except for four officers who succeeded in escaping from the town during the last night before the final assault.

On the Teruel Front

We crawled forward on hands and knees over the clean-smelling wheat and straw in the black dark of a front-line dugout. An unseen man said, "There, where the cross on the lens is, you see it?"

Looking out from the darkness through a small opening in the periscopic observation glasses across a bright sunlit, tawny plain, you detached a yellow, flat-topped, steep-flanked hill with a shiplike prow rising from the plain to protect the yellow brick-built town clumped above the river bank. Four cathedral spires rose from the town. Three roads ran from it lined with green trees. Around it were green sugar-beet fields. It looked pretty, peaceful and undamaged, and its name was Teruel. The Rebels had held it since the beginning of the war, and behind it were red cliffs, sculptured by erosion into columns that looked like organ pipes, and beyond the cliffs to the left was a devil's playground of red, waterless badlands.

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"You see it, don't you?" asked the man in the dark.

"Yes," replied the writer, and, returning from sightseeing to war, swung the periscope back to the solitary butte, studying the white scars and eruptions of its surface that showed the extent of its fortifications.

"That's the Mansueto. That's why we haven't taken Teruel," said the officer.

Studying that natural fortress, guarding the town to the east, flanked by several thimble-shaped hillocks thrusting up from the plain like geyser cones, also all heavily fortified, you realize the problem Teruel presented to any army trying to take it from any direction except the northwest.

While the Anarchist columns had lain in the hills above it for eight months, they had so much respect for the problem that they avoided all contact with the enemy. At many places the old lines we saw were from one to three kilometers from the enemy wire, with kitchens out in front of the front lines, which were regarded as places to retire to, and the only contact made with the enemy was on the purest friendly basis, according to a Loyalist officer now commanding part of this sector, when the Anarchists would issue invitations to the Rebel forces for football matches.

Madrid

They say you never hear the one that hits you. That's true of bullets, because, if you hear them, they are already past. But your correspondent heard the last shell that hit this hotel. He heard it start from the battery, then come with a whistling incoming roar like a subway train to crash against the cornice and shower the room with broken glass and plaster. And while the glass still tinkled down and you listened for the next one to start, you realized that now finally you were back in Madrid.

Madrid is quiet now. Aragon is the active front. There's little fighting around Madrid except mining, counter-mining, trench raiding, trench-mortar straffing and sniping, in a stalemate of constant siege warfare going on in Carabanchel, Usera and University City. The cities are shelled very little. Some days there is no shelling and the weather is beautiful and the streets are crowded. The shops are full of clothing; jewelry stores, camera shops, picture dealers are all open and the bars are crowded.

Beer is scarce and whiskey is almost unobtainable. Store windows are full of Spanish imitations of all cordials, whiskies and vermouths. These are not recommended for internal use, although I am employing something called Milords Ecosses Whiskey on my face after shaving. It smarts a little, but I feel very hygienic. I believe it would be possible to cure athlete's foot with it, but one must be very careful not to spill it on one's clothes because it eats wool.

The crowds are cheerful and the sandbag-fronted cinemas are crowded every afternoon. The nearer one gets to the front, the more cheerful and optimistic the people are. At the front itself, optimism reaches such a point that your correspondent, very much against his good judgment, was induced to go swimming in a small river forming a no-man's land on the Cuenca front the day before yesterday.

The river was a fast-flowing stream, very chilly and completely dominated by Fascist positions, which made me even chillier. I became so chilly at the idea of swimming in the river at all under the circumstances that, when I actually entered the water, it felt rather pleasant. But it felt even pleasanter when I got out of the water and behind a tree.

At that moment, a government officer who was a member of the optimistic swimming party shot a watersnake with his pistol, hitting it on the third shot. This brought a reprimand from another, not so completely optimistic officer member, who asked what he wanted to do with that shooting—get machine guns turned on us?

We shot no more snakes that day, but I saw three trout in the stream which would weigh over four pounds apiece; heavy, solid, deep-sided ones that rolled up to take the grasshoppers I threw them, making swirls in the water as deep as though you had dropped a paving stone into the stream. All along the stream, where no road ever led until the war, you could see trout; small ones in the shallows and the biggest kind in the pools and in the shadow of the bank. It's a river worth fighting for, but just a little cold for swimming.

At this moment, a shell has just alighted on a house up the street from the hotel where I am typing this. A little boy is crying in the street. A Militiaman has picked him up and is comforting him. There was no one killed on our street, and the people who started to run slow down and grin nervously. The one who never started to run at all looks at the others in a very superior way, and the town we are living in now is called Madrid.

Brunete was not a last desperate effort by the government to relieve the siege of Madrid, but the first in a series of offensives launched on the realistic basis of regarding the war as of a possible duration of two years.

In order to understand the Spanish War, it is necessary to realize the Rebels are holding on to a single linked-up line of trenches on an 800-mile front. They are holding fortified towns, often unconnected by any defenses; but those which dominate the country around them, much as castles did in the old feudal days, must be passed, turned, encircled and assaulted as the castles were in olden times.

Troops that had been on the defensive for nine months, waiting to attack, learned their first lessons in April in Casa del Campo, that frontal assaults in modern war against good machine-gun positions are suicidal. The only way an attack can overcome the superiority machine guns give defense, if the defenders are not panicked by aerial bombardment, is by surprise, obscurity or maneuver.

The government first began to maneuver in a counter-offensive that beat the Italians at Guadalajara. At Brunete, the government troops were not

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yet experienced enough to turn and take their objectives on time so that the whole front could advance. But they held and threw back a counter-offensive that cost the Rebels more men than they could afford to lose. The Loyalist casualties were estimated at 15,000. The Rebel counter-offensive across that bare terrain, lacking any element of surprise, must have cost them many more than that.

While Franco's troops have been advancing this week in the Asturias, the government troops have just completed another nibbling offensive in the extreme north of Aragon which brings them within striking distance of Jaca. Just now they are in striking distance of Huesca, Saragossa and Teruel. They can fight on in this way indefinitely, improving their positions in a series of small offensives, with limited objectives, designed to be carried out with a minimum of casualties, while teaching their army to maneuver in preparation for operations on a grand plan.

While this goes on, Franco is constantly forced to divert troops to meet these small offensives. He can continue to take "name" towns of no ultimate strategic importance, working along the coast and thus improving his international position with obvious cashable successes, or he can face the unavoidable, though postponable, necessity of again attacking Madrid and its lines of communication with Valencia.

Personally, I think Franco got himself into a fix when he advanced into Madrid and failed to take it, a situation from which he can never extricate himself. Sooner or later he must risk everything in a major offensive on the Castilian plateau.

Loyalist Army Headquarters, Teruel Front

For three days, all Teruel's communications had been cut and the government forces had taken successively Concud, Campillo and Villastar, important defensive towns guarding the city from the north, southwest and south.

Friday, while we watched from a hilltop above the town, crouching against boulders, hardly able to hold our field glasses in the fifty-mile gale which picked up the snow from the hillside and lashed it against our faces, government troops took the Muela de Teruel Hill, one of the odd thimble-shaped formations like extinct geyser cones which protect the city.

Fortified by concrete machine-gun emplacements, and surrounded by tank traps made of spikes forged from steel rails, it was considered impregnable, but four companies assaulted it as though they never had had explained to them by military experts what impregnable meant. Its defenders fell back into Teruel, and, a little later in the afternoon, as we watched, another battalion broke through the concrete emplacements of the cemetery, and the last defenses of Teruel itself were squashed or turned.

In zero weather, with a wind that made living a torture, and intermittent blizzards, the army of the Levante and part of the new army of maneuver, without the aid or presence of any International Brigades, had launched an offensive which was forcing the enemy to fight at Teruel when it was a matter of common knowledge that Franco had planned offensives against Guadalajara and in Aragon.

When we left the Teruel front last night for the all-night drive to Madrid to file this story, the presence of 1,000 Italian troops drawn from the Guadalajara front was signaled north of Teruel, where their troops, trains and transport had been bombed and machine-gunned by Loyalist aircraft. Authorities estimated that 30,000 Fascist troops were already massing on the Catalayud-Teruel road for a counter-offensive. So, regardless of whether Teruel is captured, the offensive has achieved its purpose of forcing Franco's hand and breaking up plans for simultaneous Guadalajara and Aragon offensives.

Across a country cold as a steel engraving, wild as a Wyoming blizzard or a hurricane mesa, we watched the battle which may be the decisive one of this war. In the Peninsular War, Teruel had been taken by the French in December and there was good precedent for an attack on it now. On the right were snowy mountains with timbered slopes, below was a winding pass which the Rebels held above Teruel on the Sagunto Road, from which many military authorities had expected a Franco attack to the sea to be launched. Below was the great yellow battleship-shaped natural fortification of Mansueto, the city's main protection, which the Loyalists had slipped past to the northwards, leaving it as hopeless as a stranded dreadnaught.

Close below were the spire and ocher-colored houses of Castralvo, which government troops entered as we watched. On the right, by the cemetery, there was fighting and shell bursts plumed up, while beyond, the city, neatly ordered against its fantastically eroded background of red sandstone, stood quiet as a tethered sheep too frightened to shiver when wolves are passing.

What Franco's Italians and Moors will do in the present situation of weather conditions in Teruel remains to be seen. Horses could never have stood up under the conditions of this offensive. Cars had their radiators frozen and their cylinder blocks cracked. But men could stand it, and did. One thing remains. You need infantry still to win battles, and impregnable positions are only as impregnable as the will of those who hold them.

Loyalist Army Headquarters, Teruel Front

On our left, an attack was starting. The men, bent double, their bayonets fixed, were advancing in the awkward first gallop that steadies into the heavy climb of an uphill assault. Two men were hit and left the line. One had the surprised look of a man first wounded who does not realize the thing can do this damage and not hurt. The other knew he had it very bad. All I wanted was a spade to make a little mound to get my head under, but there weren't any spades within crawling distance.

On our right was the great yellow mass of the Mansueto. Behind us the Spanish government artil-

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lery was firing, and, after the crack, came the noise like tearing silk and then the sudden spouting black geysers of high explosive shells pounding at the earth-scarred fortifications of the Mansueto.

Suddenly we heard cheering run along the line and across the next ridge we could see the Fascists running from their first line.

They ran in the leaping, plunging gait that is not panic but a retreat, and to cover that retreat their farther machine-gun posts slithered our ridge with fire. I wished very strongly for the spade, and then up the ridge we saw government troops advancing steadily. It went on like that all day and by nighttime we were six kilometers beyond where the first attack had started.

No smoke blew that day. After the Arctic cold, the blizzard and the gale that blew for five days, this was Indian-summer weather and shell bursts flowered straight up and slowly sank. And all day long the troops attacked, held, attacked again. As we had come along the road, the troops waiting in the ditch, mistaking us for high staff officers because there is nothing so distinguished as civilian clothes at the front, would shout, "Look at them up there on the hill. When do we attack? Tell us when we can go."

We sat behind trees, comfortable thick trees, and saw twigs clipped from their drooping lower branches. We watched the Fascist planes head for us and hunted shelter in a soil-eroded gulch only to watch them turn and circle to bomb the government lines near Concud. But all day long we moved forward with the steady, merciless advance the government troops were making. Up the hillsides, across the railway, capturing the tunnel, all up and over the Mansueto, down the road around the bend from Kilometer Two and finally up the last slopes to the town, whose seven church steeples and neatly geometrical houses showed sharp against the setting sun.

The late evening sky had been full of government planes, the chasers seeming to turn and dart like swallows, and, while we watched their delicate precision through our glasses, hoping to see an air fight, two trucks came noising up and stopped, dropping their tailboards to discharge a company of kids who acted as though they were going to a football game. It was only when you saw their belts with sixteen bomb pouches and the two sacks each wore that you realized what they were, "Dynamiters."

The captain said, "These are very good. You watch when they attack the town." So, in the short afterglow of the setting sun, with all around the town the flashing of the guns, yellower than trolley sparks but as sudden, we saw these kids deploy a hundred yards from us, and, covered by a curtain of machine-gun and automatic-rifle fire, slip quietly up the last slope to the town's edge. They hesitated a moment behind a wall, then came the red and black flash and roar of the bombs, and over the wall and into the town they went.

ERNEST HEMINGWAY.

Hollywood Wakes Up

HOLLYWOOD has made its debut in politics, and even The Los Angeles Times has recognized it. That newspaper recently carried a banner headline: BITE OF POLITICAL BUG STARTLES FILMLAND MOGULS. There is hardly a tea party today, or a cocktail gathering, a studio lunch table or dinner even at a producer's house, at which you do not hear agitated discussion, talk of "freedom" and "suppression," talk of tyranny and the Constitution, of war, of world economy and political theory. Advertisements in the trade papers no longer merely thank the producers for their kindness, or tell who directed, wrote and starred in the latest "Love for Two." They attack fascism in the guise of quotations from Vittorio Mussolini's book, and ask for funds to send ambulances to Loyalist Spain as an answer to the Roach excursion into filmmaking in Rome (and Roach has retired and Mussolini has gone home and RAM—Roach and Mussolini—is out of the field). They advertise hearings before the NLRB, announce Scottsboro or anti-Nazi balls, greet Ralph Bates or explain libel suits of one writers' organization against another.

Last spring, when a Hollywood Scottsboro Committee was born, Robert Benchley became its chairman, and such heretofore unpolitical personalities as Lucille Gleason, Herman Mankiewiecz, Boris Karloff and W. S. Van Dyke joined the group of more than a hundred who started the Committee. When the Salinas lettuce strike grew to the stage of vigilantism, with high-school children making pick-axe handles for street use against the strikers, a large number of actors and writers sent protests and money; and when Tom Mooney was to be heard before the California Supreme Court, sixty-eight "names" sent an urgent telegram to California's Governor asking for a fair hearing.

It all started two years ago, when the Anti-Nazi League of Hollywood was founded. Till then the most powerful and wealthy Jews had had an organization which had collected vast amounts of money to fight the growing anti-Semitic and fascist danger, but had done little with the money and nothing publicly. The Anti-Nazi League, realizing the educational value of their work, brought speakers, held monster mass meetings, organized protests against

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such actions as that of the local Nazi consul sending threatening letters to the cast of "The Road Back" or pro-Adolf pronouncements of local university officials (notably Coach Dean Cromwell of the University of Southern California). The Anti-Nazi League quickly grew to several thousand members, founded a bi-monthly newspaper, now one of the best of its kind in the country, put on two weekly radio programs on Warner Brothers radio station donated for the purpose, organized sectional commissions of women, cultural, religious, youth, Negro and other racial minority groups, under the chairmanship of such Hollywood people as Oscar Hammerstein II, Viola Brothers Shore, etc.; and at banquets, public meetings and private parties made clear what the anti-Nazi struggle means in America, in Germany, Spain, China. Among the more active members of the Anti-Nazi League are Dorothy Parker, Alan Campbell, Dudley Nichols, Mrs. Sidney Buchman, Edwin Justus Mayer, Gloria Stuart, Eddie Cantor, Ernst Lubitsch, Donald Ogden Stewart (its chairman), Herbert Biberman, Paul Muni, Ernst Toller, Sylvia Sydney, Lewis Milestone.

It was largely the writers who led the attack on the smug provincialism of Hollywood. Coming, as many of them did, from New York, where increasingly they had taken part in the growing political consciousness of artists and professional men and women, they could stand less well than the old habitués the round of sumptuous parties, where display was what counted and the same little group went around to each party without even an Elsa Maxwell to lighten the tedium with a mechanical champagne-yielding cow. And soon the writers organized. There had been a dormant group since 1921; now the Screen Writers' Guild, patterning themselves after the Screen Actors' Guild, which has practically a closed shop, put forward certain demands, and when they were refused, called a strike. But the strike never took place. Young, impulsive and unused to political action as they were, they made mistakes, and the producers walked in and "mopped up." A black list came into actual (if not theoretical) operation, writers' wives were unmistakably "spoken to" at cocktail parties, and the general fear and lack of organized action temporarily put the Screen Writers' Guild out of action. Immediately an opposition group, Screen Playwrights, was formed under the presidency of Major Rupert Hughes, who stood for "freedom" and the full individuality of the writer, and producers hastily signed a contract with them. It looked as if organization was through in Hollywood.

But not for long. World history went on, the fight in Spain, the increasing tensions in Europe; a new group, the Motion Picture Artists' Committee, came into being. This very active group, composed exclusively of motion-picture people, with Franchot Tone, Dashiell Hammett, Dudley Nichols, Gale Sondergaard, Lillian Hellman, Marian Spitzer, Samson Raphaelson, Donald Ogden Stewart, Irving Pichel, Nancy Carroll, Humphrey Cobb, Dorothy Parker, Florence March, Frank Scully as active supporters, has brought out André Malraux, Ralph Bates, Ludwig Renn, Father O'Flanagan, Ernest Hemingway to speak to Hollywood, has raised over $30,000 for Loyalist Spain—medical needs, ambulances etc.—has attempted to make the highly paid movie people see that they could use some of their money to ameliorate some of the pain and torture in the world. (This is called by film publicity agents "bad publicity.") It was this committee which, by a telephone campaign in which the Anti-Nazi League joined, drove Mussolini's son, the boy who had called war "the most beautiful of all sports," out of the town. Their activity has been such that producers are now said to be considering political clauses in movie contracts; but such contracts, according to The Hollywood Citizen-News, "would create a new frenzy among film folk."

Last April, with the validation of the Wagner Act, the Screen Writers' Guild came to life again. Within three months it had over four hundred members and had petitioned the NLRB to be recognized as the sole collective-bargaining agent of the writers. Screen Playwrights put up a fight, backed by the producers, but the hearings, just over, made it clear that constitutionally Screen Playwrights has no grounds for contest. The Screen Writers' Guild has just won an autonomous constitution from the Authors' League of America; the producers will fight the SWG claim on the grounds that the movies do not come under the Wagner Act at all, since they are not engaged in interstate commerce, and that writers are not employees within the meaning of the Act. It was in arguing this point that the hearings before the NLRB developed, according to a Hollywood trade paper, into a "prolonged comedy routine," in the course of which Grover Jones, an old-time screen playwright, testified (for Screen Playwrights) that "most screen writers are lice when it comes to honor." Apart from the comedy, the Screen Playwrights made such a poor showing that their hearing was abruptly halted, without even their president's testifying, and several members resigned "in disgust" and joined the SWG. It may take a few months for the decision to be handed down, or it might take years, if the fight is carried to the Supreme Court, which some producers have indicated they may do.

But meanwhile forty other screen workers' groups have petitions pending before the NLRB, chief and most aggressive among them being the Directors' Guild. It appears that the very salaries which were meant to keep movie people contented and drugged in their golden-goose existence have made them aware of the essential powerlessness in the modern world of mere triple garages and double feather beds. (Some producers must be agreeing with Mark Hanna's humorous disgust, when he had bribed some voters: "But they won't stay bought.")

The immediate attack of the producers, speaking through trade papers' columnists and other commen-

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tators, is to ban politics. "Hollywood is traditionally unpolitical!" is the cry, and with foreign business 40 percent of the total, look how it will suffer! This argument is a poor one because Germany and Japan have already banned so many pictures, and actors, that such censorship can hardly be laid at the door of the Anti-Nazi League or the Motion Picture Artists' Committee. Also, it might be somewhat difficult to ban politics generally without citing which side specifically. It is just three years ago that Mr. Louis B. Mayer conscripted from every worker on his lot, from millionaire actor to prop boy, a day's pay to defeat Upton Sinclair for Democratic Governor of California.

ELLA WINTER.

Two Cents a Mile

HAVING fought hard against the two-cent-a-mile coach fare a couple of years ago, having then declined to recognize a success so palpable it actually found some of them short of passenger cars, the Eastern railroads are asking the Interstate Commerce Commission for a 25-percent increase in coach fare. Maybe this request is tactical, designed to impress the public with the deplorable result of higher wages; but in any case it is thoroughly in line with the Eastern carriers' attitude toward the passenger business and will provoke nothing but joy in their official ranks if it is granted. Anyway, it is plausible to suppose that railroads would still be fighting the wage increase if there had been no chance for the freight-rate boost which will more than take care of the burden.

Assuming that the carriers are in desperate need of more revenue, the move for a higher basic fare, like the attitude behind it, nevertheless seems incredibly shortsighted. At anything more than two cents a mile, railroads are in a poor competitive position. Even now the horrifying prospect of a through bus trip between New York and Chicago is hardly enough to deter the man who holds the five-dollar saving in high esteem. And the railroads themselves have spent enough time deploring the unscientific bookkeeping of private car owners to know very well that only a cheap fare will get them out of their cars and into the trains.

These car owners represent an enormous potential business: a conservative estimate has it that if less than a quarter of the people who drive cars were to take trains whenever they can (which does not mean that car driving would be reduced by 25 percent, or even by 10 percent), the railroads' passenger business would be quadrupled. Thanks to the automobile, the people of America are obsessed with a burning, incessant desire to go places, and are tossing a considerable part of the national income into the means of satisfying that desire. Thanks to the congestion the automobile has created and the slaughter it has effected, a large proportion of car owners are willing to take a swift, air-conditioned train if the price is right. And the vast army of people who don't own cars is if anything even more travel-hungry.

Obviously there are more of both these classes in the East than in the West. Yet the Western lines have been the more aggressive and have done more to capture passengers than the Eastern carriers. Good cases in point are the spectacular successes of the Union Pacific's "Challenger" and of the fastest trains between Chicago and Minneapolis, the latter in a territory supporting the toughest competition in the world, with several swift highways, three-hour plane service and twenty or more regular passenger trains (operated by five railroads) in each direction. First to reduce fares and offer more speed and comfort, the Western roads can claim credit for more than their numerical share of the difference between the 490,000,000 passengers carried by Class I roads in 1933 and the 900,000,000-plus of 1937. Even though they recently succumbed to the temptation to take the cash in hand by raising round-trip fares, they did so intelligently and still charge less than the maximum set by the ICC.

In the East, however, the old-time policy, with its old-time contempt for the coach passenger, seems to prevail on all roads save the Baltimore and Ohio and possibly its affiliates. Why, it is hard to say; the coach passenger has paid and still pays more for what he gets than a Pullman passenger does. A car seating from sixty to ninety of his kind at two cents a mile can bring in more money than a Pullman car theoretically accommodating twenty-five at three cents a mile. When the coach fare is pushed nearer the Pullman rate, the discrepancy is so great that it can only be described as downright unjust.

Can the railroads operate a profitable passenger business at a fare of two cents a mile? Well, they can more than break even at a cent a mile—provided their trains are consistently more than half-full. Obviously a train seating 350 people can earn $1.75 a mile if it averages half its capacity at a cent a mile from one end of its run to the other. As a matter of fact, some of the most profitable trains are the familiar heavily laden cent-a-mile excursion specials. But against such possibilities, against a potential average of four or five dollars a mile, stands the hard fact that the national train-mile average revenue is only about a dollar and a half; that somehow the vast potentialities of the passenger business are denied their fulfilment, and that the tremendous possible spread between cost and maximum revenue actually has narrowed down to the vanishing point. Just what it costs, all told, to run

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the average passenger train is a matter for argument, but a dollar a mile is a fair figure for sheer operating expense, with perhaps another quarter for cost of owning the equipment, and a quarter more for ballyhoo and a proportionate share of general expenses. From which it is plain that the railroad passenger business, on the average, is not particularly lucrative as things stand now.

But just as raising coach fare to four cents a mile would make things worse, so pushing it up by 25 percent hardly seems the thing to help any. If average revenue is only a dollar and a half a mile, against an average potential of four or five, it stands to reason that the solution really lies in making rates low enough to fill the trains which must be running nearly empty, or in devising smaller trains which will cost far less than a dollar a mile to operate, and in making them all attractive to the people who are expected to use them.

This might sound hopeless, considering the fact that railroads have had a century to try it, if it were not for the fact that many are managing to do it when they set their minds to it. The "Challenger," the Southern Pacific's "Daylight," the Milwaukee Road's "Hiawatha," the Burlington's "Zephyrs," and other Western trains whose space is given over mostly to coach passengers, steadily have been turning in from two to seven dollars a mile on an average fare of *less* than two cents a mile. Crack trains of the Eastern roads, of course, have been doing as well, but with a higher average fare. The point is that these low-fare Western trains have got what it takes; the speed, comfort and price they offer are attracting so many passengers that they are well filled practically every day in the year and consequently are earning handsome profits. The "Hiawatha," for example, with an average fare of 1.9 cents a mile, has been turning in more than a million dollars a year, clear of operating costs which include fixed charges on the train itself.

It is reasonable to say that the same sort of thing, on a more modest scale, of course, can be done with an army of other trains, provided they are handled the same way. This means that railroads will have to pay more attention to developing attractive local and branch-line trains of small capacity—say 100 or so—which can be operated for 50 cents a mile. Save for a few spectacular Diesel-electric streamliners, whose first cost is forbidding, they have done little in this direction, but have kept on assigning worn-out main-line engines and old passenger cars to runs for which they never were intended.

Perhaps the big trouble with the passenger business is that railroads also carry freight. The average freight train earns around seven dollars a mile, and the average railroad executive, looking at that average figure, can't be judged too harshly if he considers the average passenger train more of a nuisance than anything else. Sometimes, indeed, he has said so; and the implication has been that his ideal of a passenger train was one carrying a hundred people paying seven cents a mile. Since this was impossible, he believed in charging all the traffic would bear. And when traffic had to go by train, that rule-of-thumb worked fairly well; or at any rate there was no telling when it didn't.

But railroads can no longer look forward to constantly increasing freight income. The likelihood is that the future high will never surpass by very much that of the Golden Twenties, if in fact it ever will equal it. Only the passenger business still holds a promise; not even a railroad official would stake his job on the statement that it never could be doubled or even tripled, or that it hasn't an outside chance, some day, of approaching freight revenue (it amounts to only 12 percent of freight revenue now). Patently the only way it can be done is to do what every retailer up against competition has had to do: to find ways of putting a better product on the market more cheaply. It can't be accomplished by boosting the price of a product which already has a tough time meeting competition; and that is the line taken by the Eastern roads when they ask for an increased coach fare.

GILBERT H. BURCK.

Alloy, West Va.

This is the town where the silica from Gauley Bridge has been stored. The poem is one of a series on Gauley Bridge, called "The Book of the Dead."—M. R.

This is the most audacious landscape. The gangster's
stance with his gun smoking and out is not so
vicious as this commercial field, its hill of glass.

Sloping as gracefully as thighs, the foothills
narrow to this, clouds over every town
finally indicate the stored destruction.

Crystalline hill; a blinded field of white
murdering snow, seamed by convergent tracks;
the traveling cranes reach for the silica.

And down the track, the overhead conveyor
slides on its cable to the feet of chimneys.
Smoke rises, not white enough, not so barbaric.

Here the severe flame speaks from the brick throat,
electric furnaces produce this precious, this clean,
annealing the crystals, fusing at last alloys.

Hottest for silicon, blast furnaces raise flames,
spill fire, spill steel, quench the new shape to freeze,
tempering it to perfected metal.

Forced through the crucible, a million men.
Above this pasture, the highway passes those
who curse the air, breathing their fear again.

The roaring flowers of the chimney-stacks
less poison, at their lips in fire, than this
dust that is blown from off the field of glass;

blows and will blow, rising over the mills,
crystallized and beyond the fierce corrosion
disintegrated angel on these hills.

MURIEL RUKEYSER.

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Shoot the Works

Dr. Dewey Finds Communists in the CIO—What Has Politics to Do with Union Membership? —Browder v. Green, Frey and Woll

DR. JOHN DEWEY has devoted many years of his life to fostering and aiding progressive causes. The journey to Mexico for the Trotsky investigation must have been a severe strain, but after hanging Soviet Russia in the morning the distinguished educator should have rested a little while before proceeding to lynch the CIO.

Whether the findings in regard to Trotsky were well or ill advised will be discussed by others. The merits of the decision are susceptible to argument, for a long report was submitted. But in a recent interview with Mrs. Agnes Meyer in The Washington Post, Mr. Dewey made certain charges against the CIO which are based merely upon the statement, "It is common knowledge."

Surely, a psychologist of Mr. Dewey's experience knows that a great many things which are "common knowledge" are also wholly untrue. Surely, the scholar who criticized the methods of Soviet courts should not risk his own reputation for judicial fairness by picking up gossip and rumor and dogmatically setting it forth as demonstrated fact.

In the interview which Dr. Dewey gave to The Washington Post, he was quoted as saying, "It is common knowledge that the CIO in its eagerness for rapid growth at the beginning accepted many members and even used organizers who belonged to one or another of these Communist factions. . . . The danger lies in the fact that the tactics employed by these Communist groups have invaded the forces of labor and are attempting to divide it."

I did not see the interview as it came fresh from the pages of The Washington Post and the extract here was taken as rendered by Dorothy Thompson in her column. Somewhere along the line the last sentence seems to have been balled up a little, for it does not precisely scan. Still the implications of Dr. Dewey's remarks seem clear enough. At any rate, I take it that he is saying that the Committee for Industrial Organization, because of haste, departed from sound trade-union practice by admitting Communists into its unions and by appointing Communists as organizers. Further he charges that the Communists are trying to split the labor movement.

It seems to me that before making such statements Dr. Dewey ought to call another investigating committee nearer home and consider testimony. Undoubtedly some of the members of the CIO are members of the Communist Party or Communist sympathizers. The same thing holds true of the American Federation of Labor. The American Newspaper Guild was welcomed into the A. F. of L., although we took occasion to point out that our constitution provided that there should be no racial, religious or political test in regard to membership. We felt and still feel that such a provision is necessary to protect trade-union democracy.

Does Dr. Dewey seriously mean to contend that certain workers should be barred from union membership because of their political or economic views? And would he go on to urge that any who come into the fold as good Democrats or Republicans should forthwith be expelled the moment they become converted to Marxism?

Aside from the ethical problem involved it would be the most short-sighted thing in the world to make dual unionism imperative by barring radicals from existing unions. As for the charge that the Communists are trying to split the labor movement, the reverse is true. Dr. Dewey is behind in his homework. He has not kept up with The Daily Worker or with recent developments in the labor field. The Communist Party has gone on record as favoring industrial unions, but its spokesmen again and again have urged the peaceful fusion of the A. F. of L. and the CIO.

I am not speaking now simply on the basis of "common knowledge." When the Newspaper Guild was admitted into the A. F. of L., William Green personally presented the charter at a general meeting. He read us a long lecture on the evils of industrial unionism, which nettled me, and I replied by bawling him out and offering to resign as president in order to bring about an immediate referendum with the hope that it would take us into the CIO. Moreover, I went to Washington the next day and got Lewis to put me on the executive committee of his organization.

When I got back to New York a small group of left-wing Guild men and women called on me and lashed into me a great deal harder than I had lashed into Green. They asserted that I was guilty of infantile conduct and that I had betrayed the best principles of trade-union practice by adding my two cents' worth to the forces that were trying to split the labor movement into two camps. They argued with great vehemence that the Guild, although declaring for the principle of industrial unionism, should remain in the A. F. of L. and work for harmony between Green and Lewis.

It was a knock-down and drag-out argument, because I remained convinced that I was right and the committee remained convinced that I was wrong. Eventually the radical minority in the Guild came along with the majority and voted to go into the CIO, but that was only after the executive committee of the A. F. of L. had worked hand in glove with the Hearst management in an effort to compel acceptance of defeat in the Seattle strike. The irony of that situation was that the favorable settlement of the strike came after a conference with Mr. Hearst in which, as Guild president, I pointed out to the publisher that the terms set by Mr. Green were so onerous I felt sure that Mr. Hearst himself would admit their unfairness. And in the end the Hearst management tacitly agreed to this contention, because it agreed to throw out the Green formula as one ludicrously leaning wholly in favor of the employer.

John L. Lewis once said when questioned about his attitude toward radicals, "I'll work with anyone who'll work with me." Stanley Isaacs, the president of the Borough of Manhattan, has just appointed Simon Gerson of The Daily Worker as his confidential assistant. When a protest was made that Mr. Gerson was a Communist, Mr. Isaacs replied that he was interested in his assistant's ability and not in his politics. Gerson was elected a delegate to the last Guild convention and I know of my own experience that he has been one of the hardest workers and one of the most loyal members in the Guild.

Indeed, as I have said on several occasions, any labor union which is without Communists certainly ought to try

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its darndest to get at least one. Whether in support or opposition, a Communist representation helps to pep up the organization and keep it on its toes. And if Dr. Dewey will call a neutral group of investigators together, I will endeavor to obtain a competent advocate to make good the contention that Earl Browder has done far more for labor unity in the last year than William Green, Colonel Frey or even Mattie Woll. HEYWOOD BROUN.

Washington Notes

Gun-Carriers Against Monopoly—Victories Must Come Slowly—The Workers and the Farmers Prepare to Link Arms

MANY LIBERALS hope that Mr. Robert H. Jackson's radio speech last week, with its evident White House imprimatur, means that the administration has finally committed itself to war on monopoly. The sub-group within the New Deal that for months has wanted to make monopoly the chief New Deal issue is seasoned, stout-hearted and wily. Its members, in my opinion, have abundantly demonstrated their right to take charge of the New Deal forces. Their think-men are Drs. Henderson of the WPA, Lubin of the Bureau of Labor Statistics and Currie of the Federal Reserve System. The man who carries the sub-group's elephant-gun is Mr. Jackson himself. Oddly enough, some of their most useful helpers in Congress are persons who fought the President's Court plan with desperate frenzy—men like Senators Wheeler and O'Mahoney. Since the Supreme Court's chiseling away of existing statutes has given vast support to present-day monopoly, the attitude of these Senators is hard to fathom.

The recent history of the anti-monopoly issue indicates that we probably cannot expect quick victories. A certain degree of credit for bringing the issue into political daylight must be given to Senators Borah and Nye, who jointly fathered an anti-monopoly investigation during the days when the NRA rode high. You will recall that Mr. Clarence Darrow was lured to Washington to be their counsel, that he went motoring with General Hugh S. Johnson and tossed barbed-wire jokes in the direction of the White House. The anti-monopoly campaign had its real start, however, when shortly after this Dr. Henderson left the NRA to become adviser to the Senate Committee on Manufactures, with Messrs. La Follette and Bulkley as his backers. About this same time Mr. John Dickinson, pronouncing the existing anti-trust laws unenforceable, departed from the Department of Justice, and Mr. Jackson was appointed in his place. Working at first separately, Dr. Henderson and Mr. Jackson began urging that the New Deal throw its chief forces against the pricing and merchandizing systems of big business.

Both men are understood to have tried to make monopoly the main issue of the 1936 campaign. This was vetoed by Mr. Roosevelt and his Democratic Party advisers, who wanted instead to plug New Deal prosperity—"we planned it that way," to use the President's own words. Mr. Roosevelt was warned that as long as monopolistic industry remained almost wholly beyond community control, he could not bank on an indefinite continuation of prosperity, but such forebodings were brushed aside. Then came Mr. Roosevelt's first great defeat on the Court issue—a defeat brought about in large measure by big-business propaganda. And now he faces an economic depression in which, to quote a White House adviser, "America's sixty families have a pistol at his head." Apparently the President has at last reversed his attitude toward the monopoly issue, and it is almost certain to be the war-cry of this year's elections.

But just because monopoly has been for so long an orphan child in Washington, it is unreasonable to expect that the administration can spring into instant action. The mere framing of legislation to give effective social control over heavy industry is an unbelievably complicated affair; many legal experts, pointing to the past trend of Supreme Court decisions, doubt if it can be done without a constitutional amendment. Even more serious, however, is the fact that the "do-something-for" element of the New Deal—those who want to do something for the farmer, something for the big business man and the little business man, something for the CIO and the A. F. of L.—are largely antipathetic to any slow, toilsome, fundamental issue.

In the near future there is to be a conference between organized workers and organized farmers to decide on political coöperation. It will be the outgrowth of an alliance formed among Labor's Non-Partisan League, the Farmers' Union and the formidably named United Cannery, Agricultural, Packing and Allied Workers, on December 12 at St. Paul. The terms of the alliance are set forth in a remarkable document signed for the Non-Partisan League by Mr. E. L. Oliver, its secretary; for the Farmers' Union by Mr. John Vesecky, its new president and the most interesting farm leader in the country; and for the UCAPAW by Mr. Donald Henderson, hero of many hard-fought strikes of agricultural labor.

The provisions of this document are matter-of-fact, hard-headed and precise. Among other things, each of the contracting parties affirms that it will refrain from making mean-tempered remarks about the rest in its newspapers. The Non-Partisan League and the UCAPAW agree not to try to organize the workers in farm coöperatives without first consulting with farm leaders. Fine phrases and cloudy aspirations are conspicuously omitted. No pretense is made that farmers and industrial workers have identical interests, or that they ought to be able to agree on the last detail of an immediate program. The alliance is cast in the form of an old-fashioned political deal, under which reciprocal support is pledged by each group.

The document, however, contains a section around which it is hoped a future welding of farmers' and workers' groups can take place. Pains are taken to emphasize that at bottom both farmers and industrial workers are now exploited by the same big-city financiers. For the purpose of making this exploitation apparent, a demand is incorporated for a federal investigation of the low prices paid to the farmer for his produce and the high prices charged the worker-consumer for his food and clothes. This section is understood to be the handiwork of Mr. Oliver, who as an ex-official of the Federal Trade Commission is intimately familiar with the Commission's effort to dig into the profits of the packers' trust, the tobacco trust and the other great financial groups that stand between farmers and industrial workers.

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This St. Paul alliance promises to be of great use in the present session of Congress. It will be especially important in the Senate, where up to now organized labor has been at a disadvantage. The thinly populated Great Plains and Rocky Mountain states each send two representatives to the Senate, and in this area, except for the metal miners and railroad workers, labor has little political power. It happens, however, that the Great Plains and Rocky Mountain states are the strongholds of the Farmers' Union. Consequently it is hoped that the St. Paul alliance will add from fifteen to twenty votes to labor's strength in the Senate, while the Non-Partisan League, in return, can bring a bloc of perhaps a hundred members of the House to the support of farm measures.

Washington. T. R. B.

Other People's Money

How the President Combated the Great Epidemic —Too Many Doctors Spread the Bacilli— Have the Admirals Got the Cure?

THE INSPIRING efforts of the President to meet and conquer the Great Dragon of the Depression brings to mind the manner in which our great leader overcame that celebrated spread of disease which has come to be known as the Great Epidemic.

It began in the spring. A few cases here and there. It was a sort of anemia with a paralyzing languor. There was some alarm at first, but the newspapers and the Chamber of Commerce said it was not serious. Then it began to appear in the South, in New England, in Pennsylvania and Ohio and in parts of Michigan. The President first said it was being greatly exaggerated by his enemies to embarrass him, but he assured the people that their health was fundamentally sound.

But somehow the disease germ seemed to be anti-administration. The disease spread. Men, women and children were stricken by hundreds of thousands and many died. So the President had to act. He did the obvious thing. He sent for certain great business leaders. He sent for Mr. Bernard Baruch, Mr. Myron Taylor and others who might be supposed to know how to cope with an epidemic. He organized a committee of business leaders in the Department of Commerce to chart our course. But, oddly, none of these measures had any effect on the disease.

But since the epidemic was plainly a business matter, his next step was to summon those whose business activities might be regarded as most nearly related to physical disease. Therefore he called in a conference of drug manufacturers, bandage makers, makers of patent medicines, thermometers and surgical supplies. These great men, who had done so much to make America what she was, outlined a program for the President. But the onrushing contagion paid as little attention to their program as the ocean's rollers to the name of king.

The President now decided that the moment was at hand for what might be called a "brain trust." He needed experts. Here was a mysterious disease in the physical order. So he decided it was a case for the doctors. The President had a neighbor who had delivered hundreds of babies in his time. His wife knew an excellent dentist. One of the Cabinet had a friend who was a chiropractor in California. Others had good family physicians. So the President called them together. And his first contact with them was most heartening.

These doctors all declared that they understood the disease perfectly and knew precisely what to do about it. Happily they were joined by an able old corn-doctor who had a hobby of studying the blood. When it came to the cure there was a little difficulty, as the doctors did not agree. But this was a situation with which the President was equipped to deal. He simply adopted a small part of each man's recommendation. One doctor urged quinine capsules every two hours. The President gave one a week. Another was for an operation on the patient and the removal of a certain gland. Another opposed this. The President wisely decided to please the first doctor by operating—giving the ether and opening the stomach, but pleasing the other doctor by not removing anything.

But even these wise measures availed not against the mysterious epidemic. The President was at his wits' end. He had done everything imaginable. He had called in the business leaders. He had conferred with the politicians. He had raised up armies of nurses and of clean-up squads appointed by congressional districts. He had called in the doctors. He had, in fact, done everything save consult the whims of those experts who had made a special study of this disease. But that obviously was a foolish idea. Yet there were men who were ungracious enough to criticize our President for this omission.

One rather crack-brained but well intentioned old fellow went to him. "Mr. President," he said, "you have been calling in the wrong kind of doctors. This is not a case for family physicians and chiropractors and corn-doctors and amateur physicians. It's a case for laboratory research scientists. After all, you wouldn't behave thus if you were dealing with an economic depression. You wouldn't consult bankers and brokers and lawyers and promoters. You wouldn't call in any set of little textbook prattlers and Wall Street statisticians. You would seek a group of those eminent students of the business cycle and the mechanisms and anatomy of the capitalist system and ask them to make a study of the disease called depression and you would be guided by them. Why do you not behave in the same intelligent way in this great epidemic of physical disease?"

The President laughed and explained kindly that the cases were different. Then some herb doctors from the West urged a remedy that appealed to the President. He tried it and found that it worked. It was a ration of six ounces of rum a day. As the patients suffered from a condition of languor and blood poverty, the rum produced the most pleasing exhilaration and the patients forgot all about their illness. In a little while the epidemic seemed to have almost vanished. There was some difficulty after the patients became used to the alcohol and found that they needed a larger dose to produce the same effect. And soon the President began to fear for the supplies of alcohol, which seemed to be running low. But the nation seemed to be restored to health and the President was hailed as the greatest physician of our age—which was extraordinary, since he had never given this subject a thought before he was elected.

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But in time the effects of the rum wore very thin and the supplies of alcohol ran very low, so that the epidemic returned and presently was raging almost as wildly as before. Then the President hit upon his great idea. He discovered, so he said, that the people were suffering from a sort of softness. And he decided that what they needed was a more vigorous and virile existence. Then he remembered one group he had failed to consult. So he called in the generals and the admirals. Before long the trumpets were sounding, the drums were rolling. Great battleships rose upon the ways and thousands wrought upon their sides and in the great steel and chemical and other industries. Men rushed about selling government bonds. Women toiled night and day knitting for the guards. Before this vigorous regimen the dreadful disease rolled away like the morning mist and soon the sun was shining down upon a healthy, happy and marching people.

JOHN T. FLYNN.

New Year's Craw

READING through the year a paper that is dear to you, and even more so if you belong to it, you are sure to find points for which you bless it and a few points where you want to put a finger in, for the paper's sake, you may tell yourself, or the sake of your mind's peace, or of the general gods, something or other. Though it took a New Year and its pinch of resolution to bring me to it apparently, there are three of these items that have stuck in my craw till I have promised myself to make my comment. In the cause of divers causes I will do so, telling myself perhaps that I am thus like the Latin bull in the zodiac opening the year with golden horns.

In his article on Sherwood Anderson, which made a part of Mr. Cowley's capital scheme for a series of literary revaluations, Mr. Hamilton Basso said in passing that Sherwood Anderson "discovered" William Faulkner. It may not be, as they say, a matter that is vital, but I have kept thinking that, if we are to go into it at all, it should for the sake of the record be set down straight. Exactly at what stage of notice, appreciation, endorsement or what you will, "discovery" may be said to begin, may not be a fixed question but what the term in general implies is clear.

I used every summer to go for a short visit to my father in Oxford, Mississippi. I used also to see there always a friend of mine, Phil Stone, something younger than I was and older than William Faulkner, about whom he often spoke, and whom he soon brought to our house. I already knew the family of course. That was about 1914. Later on I used to see Bill Faulkner and read the manuscripts that his friend had praised and pushed so. Finally in the summer of 1920, after the World War, I found him at Oxford in a rebellious mood. Despite the kindness of his parents, and so on, he wanted another sort of life; and I suggested that he come to New York and sleep on my sofa till Miss Prall, a friend of mine, manager of the bookshop in Lord and Taylor's corner, could find him a place there and he could find a room. He did both. (How—for the record again—different that homely denim sofa, bought at a sale, was from that of the interviews: an antique I so preciously feared would be ruined by the wild young genius!) The rest of the data is that Miss Prall married Sherwood Anderson and went to live with him in New Orleans, Bill Faulkner drifted back South and to New Orleans, where through Miss Prall he had a special road open to Sherwood. In sum, whatever the Anderson influence or introduction may have done, if discovering has to be brought in, it was by Mr. Phil Stone, an Oxford lawyer, who constantly worked, in person and in correspondence, for the promotion of a man he believed in.

In The New Republic for May 26, Mr. Mario Michele had an article called "Fontamara Revisited" that has given me a great deal to think about. It is an account of the town, written by the son of a woman who had emigrated from there to America; he tells of the conditions there, the town under the Fascist regime, et cetera, et cetera. We read of the poverty, the fact that there is no water supply and plumbing, the cousins who cannot marry because they cannot afford to buy enough linen, the resentment of the aunt toward the "government" but her enthusiasm for the King and Mussolini, taxes, regimented prostitution, and so on, plus what had been fed to these citizens' minds by the official press concerning Ethiopia, Germany and what not. All that keeps all the able-bodied of this town from emigrating, I gather, is the eye disease brought on by certain waters the town drinks. How complete, how convincing this article might seem!

I thought all that over, knowing from the start that something was wrong. For I myself have seen these villages, precise parallels to this of Mr. Michele's. What was the matter with his article—it is really a sort of vignette in strong wash black and white—what is there about it that comes out wrong? Then finally I knew well enough what was the matter. In the first place, even though his piece has a certain clarity, order of arrangement, concreteness of detail and instance, perhaps vividness; even though its examples be provable, if you like; its reactions—though superficial—be authentic; the fact remains that a man of genuine quality thinks well before he sets down, for outsiders to regard, a drastic judgment of his own kind or origins, knowing as he must that what he says takes on an extra meaning from the mere fact of his insideness as it were. A mentality—facility is better—to be mistrusted.

In the second place Mr. Michele's points all assume a perfectly certified basis from the given standpoint of our popular American naïve reliance on water-closets, "freedom," non-provincialism, et cetera. These are no doubt excellent things, and certainly they are more easily understood and expressed than such elements of human living as austere dignity, a grave passionate sense of tradition, living within the idea of a State, subordinating individual inclinations to the good of the family, and so on, especially when these matters cannot be understood by one's readers unless it be as words, with all that ensuing illusion of the literary jabber in place of the reality. These Fontamara people living in two rooms, these daughters not marrying until they fulfill the accepted requirements, these hosts celebrating their visitor with a chicken and one's best clothes—what is it that may give, and very often does, for I have seen it time and again, their faces an expression of character, style universal type, at times even grandeur, that their cousins sons and daughters so soon lose in New York, Brooklyn Chicago? Style, character, perpetuity!

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And remotely, quite regardless of Fascist pros and cons, is the approach to the theory of the totalitarian State somewhat different in a people with this combined acceptance and violence of the Mediterranean, with its timeless patterns, those centuries, those historic finalities, diffuse, mystical, dynamic? The photographically urgent, the socially trivial, the spiritually shallow—the divisions between these are delicate and elusive. Mr. Michele of Fontamara beware!

The third item came in Mr. Ralph Bates's series of Spanish articles, and described the soldiers in their ardor as they cleared the way to a new era, burning the paraphernalia and images of the churches. Whatever they found they brought for him to see, he must decide whether it had artistic value or should be destroyed. He would decide about that and advise them. No doubt, to judge by certain very fine passages in his Spanish accounts, Mr. Bates has taste enough. But to settle the hash of such a procedure in artistic judgments, we have only to ask this: where should we be if the Church had taken such an attitude? Where indeed if we consider, for example, the centuries when Renaissance went into Baroque, the particular puritanism of the Counter-Reformation undertook certain purges, or the eighteenth century snubbed the Romantics? Nine-tenths of the art preserved to us would have been thrown out long ago. The Church, even humanly, knew better.

STARK YOUNG.

After a brilliant debut at the Bennington Dance Festival last summer, Hanya Holm made her first New York City appearance at Mecca Auditorium on December 28 and 29 with her dance composition, "Trend." The dance treats of the disintegration of modern society which reaches its nadir in a cataclysm after a short-lived dictatorship. This is followed by the development of a more hopeful creative spirit. The exposition of this theme in a single work was a staggering task which Miss Holm has achieved in part with high success. The various solos by group members who successively offered opiates to the downtrodden people are still the most carefully delineated and dramatically effective sections.

PAUL LOVE.

Oregon Winter

The rain begins. This is no summer rain,
Dropping fat blotches of wet on the dusty road.
This rain is slow, without thunder or hurry;
There is plenty of time—there will be months of rain.

Lost in the hills, the old gray farmhouses
Hump their backs against it, and smoke from their chimneys
Struggles through weighted air. The sky is sodden with water,
It sags against the hills, and the wild geese,
Wedge-flying, brush the heaviest cloud with their wings.

The farmers move unhurried. The wood is in,
The hay has long been in, the barn lofts piled
Up to the high windows, dripping yellow straws.
There will be plenty of time now, time that will smell of fires,
And drying leather, and catalogues, and apple cores.
The farmers clean their boots, and whittle, and drowse.

JEANNE MCGAHEY.

The Bandwagon

Infinitely greater . . . stands the implicit order of our Imperial Navy never under any conditions whatever to bomb unarmed civilians or civilian communities. It is a matter of the honor of the Imperial Navy. And that, of course, is something more serious and precious than life.—*Lt. Commander Michitaka Hiramoto, of the Imperial Japanese Navy, describing the bombing of Nanking, in which he participated. Quoted in Asia Magazine.*

We have absurd ideas about Christ. Christ was by no means filled with love and pity, but with wild wrath against the Jews. He never thought of founding a church. A church is a foreign body amongst the Aryan German people.—*From a sermon delivered by Bishop Ludwig Müller, the Primate who was forced on the German Evangelical Church by the Nazi dictatorship. Quoted in The Manchester Guardian.*

THEN PEACE, BLAST IT!

Nothing could be more disastrous to the morale of the country than a regulation requiring months to overcome in the event of trouble. And, too, there's always the possibility of a majority of pacifists, noncombatants and conscientious objectors in the land. Then what?—*From an editorial on the Ludlow war-referendum proposal in The Alameda, Calif., Times-Star.*

ALL IN THE DAY'S WORK

"I do not know why my friend Lieutenant Dur Khan of the Indian Army happened to mention it," said General Giles, "but in his letter which I have just received from Kohat on the northwest frontier, he wrote, 'You will be interested to know that my son's cousin's wife has given birth to six sons.' He did not give their names and that is all I know about it except that the mother and sons are doing well.

"They are a hearty race, those hill people. It is splendid for the father. Six sons—think of it!"—*From an interview with Major General E. D. Giles, quoted in a London dispatch to The New York Times.*

BUT A BAD HABIT OF GETTING SHOT

Gaeta had wonderful qualities. He was generous to a fault, and he had fine possibilities of leadership. That young man could have been a second Mussolini.—*The Rev. E. Ambrose Jenkins, commenting on Louis Gaeta, a murdered gambler, quoted in The Boston Globe.*

FINE-FRENZY DEPARTMENT

War is not an occasion for extensive deliberation. . . . With a juicy prize like the United States at its mercy, any foreign power contemplating gobbling us up would smoothly blind us with blandishments and false protestations, secretly arm to the teeth, prepare to the minute and launch such a devastating assault as to sweep us from our national feet before we could get our wits together.—*From an editorial in The Durham, N. C., Sun.*

Our readers are invited to contribute to this column and $1 will be paid for each item used. Address The Bandwagon, care of The New Republic.—THE EDITORS.

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CORRESPONDENCE

"Panay" Perspectives

SIR: The myth-making mechanisms are working as ominously as ever. Our accepted view of the sinking of the "Panay" is an example. The myth focuses on and isolates Japan, turns her into a guilty nation, makes our demands on her righteous if not holy, and in brief authorizes a perspective that ignores the sterner realities in the situation. Underlying the myth's denunciation of Japan lurks, moreover, a dismaying justification of it. The reparation it commands us to exact belongs to the same order of things that precipitated the deplorable event, and thus the myth identifies us with Japan while ostensibly dissociating us from her. The feeling that we must do something in the matter hardens automatically into a conviction that there is only one kind of thing that we can do. In this way the myth slams the door on all hope of intelligent thought and action, and causes us to support the very process whose evil consequences we so fiercely resent.

Achievement of a different perspective is the first move towards saner conduct. Nor should this prove too difficult to bring about. For the old perspective, on the most cursory examination, shows palpable falseness and superficiality. The world sank the "Panay," as the world gassed the Ethiopians and lit the fires of revolution in Spain. When the nations blasted open the sea gates of Japan they also blasted her with the knowledge that to count as a nation she must play the game she is playing now. And the game is more than any one of its rules, and generates infractions of them inevitably.

A soberer outlook would recognize this fact. Instead of exhibiting Japan as a solitary culprit, it would bring our own share in the responsibility and shame into sharp focus. Choice among differing types of action would then be liberated. Demands might be made on ourselves, or, better, on all the nations that are embroiled in the Far East, which might be a start towards an ordering of world affairs that would eliminate "Panays."

White Plains, N. Y. JAMES H. HART.

Amend the Neutrality Act?

SIR: Something is going to have to be done about the Neutrality Act. Why not consider amending it to provide for a temporary embargo on both sides on the outbreak of hostilities, with the proviso that the embargo might be lifted against a victim of aggression, in case the signers of the Kellogg Pact and the United States could agree in naming the aggressor and could agree to act jointly? (I should favor making even the temporary embargo at the discretion of the President, but others may have different views.) Some such language as the following might be added to Section 4, which already makes an exception in favor of American states:

> The provisions of this Act shall not apply, or shall cease to apply, to any state that has been attacked in violation of any treaty to which the United States is a party (this includes the Kellogg Pact), provided that the state making the attack has been pronounced an aggressor and a treaty violator by a majority of the states signatory to the treaty in question and provided that the United States concurs in that judgment.

It seems to me that a workable statute should not tie the hands of United States diplomacy by announcing in advance to aggressors that the economic power of this country will be "impartial" as between law-breaker and victim. Neither should it be so framed as to push us into single-handed adventures in world policing, or into concerted action with other powers against our own judgment. It should permit the United States government to join in collective economic sanctions, where the prospects of restraining aggression by such action or by the threat of it are good. It should permit a policy of isolation by embargoes against both sides in a war, if we are confronted by a general mêlée where prevention through strengthening the forces of law and peace no longer has any point. It should permit a policy of do-nothing if that is a better way to ride out the storm.

EUGENE STALEY,
Medford, Mass. Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy.

Some Names for Mr. Whipple

SIR: Because I have seen neither of the books in question my nominations may serve to bolster Mr. T. C. Wilson rather than Mr. Whipple. However: in your issue of November 24, Mr. Wilson asks Mr. Whipple to name "younger writers in America or England (not represented in the books Mr. Whipple had reviewed) . . . more representative in style and ideology than the following . . . "; and after submission of an imposing list of names of younger British and American writers, he asks for, not explanations or excuses, but names.

Well then! To name names of younger writers, in England only, what of William Empson (ask Kenneth Burke), Rayner Heppenstall (ask Michael Sayers), Charles Madge (ask William Butler Yeats) and Michael Roberts (ask T. S. Eliot)? Perhaps not "hot stuff"; yet certainly not three-four above!

Bourbonnais, Ill. MURRAY DICKEY LEY.

SIR: Usually I consider the opinions of Mr. T. C. Wilson worth reading, but in his letter published in the November 24 issue of The New Republic he seems to have gone haywire in replying to Mr. T. K. Whipple. Not that Mr. Whipple's review of "New Letters in America" and "New Writing" constituted much for one to agree with.

But Mr. Wilson says, referring to Mr. Whipple's inference that there may be other writers worthy of attention besides the New Letters-New Writing clique: "Since Mr. Whipple knows of better, more representative younger writers than these, let him name them. Apparently they have not yet cared to publish their efforts, but in the face of his review Mr. Whipple should be required to let us in on his and their secret. They must be pretty hot stuff and I, for one, should like to read their work. I do not want explanations or excuses, I want names."

Names he shall have. Here are a few that the editors of "New Letters" and "New Writing" have not as yet printed; in fact, most of them have published the greater part of their work in little magazines. I suggest that Mr. Wilson glance at the work of these younger writers: Eudora Welty, Robert Hutchison, Erling Larsen, Charles Bradford, Clark Mills, Robert O. Erisman, Hilde Abel, Louis Mamet, Jon Edgar Webb, Howard Nutt, Fred R. Miller, Kenneth Rexroth and Leon Dorais. (The last four named have appeared in The New Republic, I believe.) Not only have these writers cared to publish their work, but they have also written—in some cases—work as interesting and representative as the authors Mr. Wilson names. And that doesn't mean that I have any fault to find with most of those he mentions: the material published in both of the volumes has been largely of high quality. But the fact remains that, for various reasons, there are a great many younger writers who don't get the attention they deserve. . . .

Denver, Colo. WELDON KEES.

No More Fords

SIR: I have for the past several years bought a new Ford every year. In view of the defiance by the Ford Motor Company, not only of the fair principles of collective bargaining and civil liberties, but of the law of the land as expressed in the Wagner Labor Relations Act and interpreted by the National Labor Relations Board, I have decided to buy no more Fords unless and until the Ford labor policy is drastically changed.

Incidentally, the experience of several of my friends, as well as of myself, with the 1937 Ford, seems to indicate that the policy in question does not encourage careful workmanship.

Are there any others who feel the same way?

New York City. FORMER FORD OWNER.

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Highlander Folk

SIR: Conditions among Southern workers defy description. Sharecroppers live in peonage; textile villages are among the nation's largest sweatshops; a million mountaineers in eight states face starvation. Manufacturers organized to maintain the Southern wage differential fight the organization of labor with terror. A New York Times correspondent in Florida wrote (November 21, 1937) "The Klan is not riding back to power. It has already reached that destination."

To change these conditions, which are a threat to living standards of workers everywhere and which offer a fertile field for the growth of reactionary movements, a strong and progressive labor movement must be built in the South. The Highlander Folk School is helping to that end by offering short courses for workers to equip them for more intelligent service in the labor movement.

The school also serves as a year-round educational and social center for our mountain community. Emphasis is placed on cooperative activities. Folk culture is preserved. The early American dances have been revived as an expression of a workers' culture.

Through our extension department a program of social education has been made available to groups of workers within a radius of 150 miles. The school takes an active part in the struggles of the workers to improve their conditions.

Our fifth annual winter term starts January 10. A staff of seven people receive maintenance but no salaries. Money is needed for scholarships and maintenance. Books are needed for the library, including books for children. Also money is needed for a proposed nursery in the community. The school is supported by voluntary contributions from individuals. Money and books may be sent to the Secretary, Highlander Folk School, Monteagle, Tennessee.

JAMES DOMBROWSKI, Secretary.

Monteagle, Tenn.

That Man Again

SIR: We, the undersigned, are deeply gratified to see Otis Ferguson's effective puncturing of that pretentious windbag, James Farrell, in The New Republic of November 10. It has long been a source of astonishment and sorrow to us that presumably serious-minded critics should make such a pother over a palpable fraud whose literary talents are so slender, whose faults are so many and obvious. Farrell's characters, far from being hard-boiled in any realistic sense, remind us (to borrow a phrase from N. West's admirable "Miss Lonelyhearts") of "a little girl making a muscle." If any of Farrell's tough characters were by chance found wandering about St. Louis, some good Samaritan would undoubtedly snatch them up to serve as cherries on an angel-food cake. Added to his almost completely unrealistic approach are his heinous faults of grammar, construction and logic. Up Ferguson! Raus mit Farrell!

WILLIAM H. WALKER, MRS. JAMES KINDER, LILLIAN BARBER, JOHN HOSKIS, GEORGE HOSKIS, S. MCBRIDE, CHARLES CORRELL, MYLES DOUGLAS, WILLIAM SPENCER, WILLIE SETTLE, OTHA E. COTTON, OLIVER STESSINS, RAYMOND HICKMAN, JAMES M. CASSIN, STEVE L. CONROY, RUSSELL FINCH, FRANK CORDON, BUD FALLON, JESSE BLUE, W. C. WEBSTER, AL ROBERTS, MAUD STEELE, SUE BROWN, JAMES C. ALLEN, PETE GAINES.

East St. Louis, Ill.

From The New Republic Mail Bag

Samuel Sharpe of New York City wishes that John T. Flynn in his "Other People's Money" would devote space to "constructive criticism." . . . John McSee of the Federal Theatre Project writes about the plan to coöperate with colleges all over the country in extending the "living newspaper" technique through their dramatic departments, a plan that has already met with marked success. . . . A Newspaper Guild member, who requests anonymity, calls our attention to the unanimous support Bruce Barton received from the newspapers that are large beneficiaries from his advertising accounts. . . . Oscar H. Fidell of New York City sends us a pro-Japanese pamphlet which, he says, "has been distributed to many of the New York City high schools." . . . Mason Wade is preparing a biography of Margaret Fuller and would be glad to hear from anyone with letters or information about her. Material should be addressed to him care of Reynal and Hitchcock, 386 Fourth Avenue, New York City.

John J. Foley of Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, expresses his interest in the article "Next—Life Insurance?" by T. R. B. in our issue of December 8 and hopes that The New Republic will print more material on this subject in the future. . . . Paul E. Reeve of Hollywood, California, thinks Otis Ferguson is better as a movie critic than as a literary reviewer. . . . G. Gillespie of Miami, Florida, protests against W. P. Mangold's article, "Why Franco Has Hesitated" (December 22) because he felt it assumed the reader was interested in the success of the Loyalist cause. . . . Norborne H. Crowell of Ithaca, New York, writes to express his strong approval of the Ludlow plan for a national referendum on war. . . . Charles F. Glaus of Roslindale, Massachusetts, writes that the only hope for peace among the nations of the world is the abolition of the "competitive system" within the nations. . . . Irving J. Weinstein of Pittsburg reports that the people who are the "true sufferers from the recession are the on-and-off reliefers," those who left the relief rolls for private employment and are now having difficulty in getting back on them.

Martha M. Eliot, assistant chief of the Children's Bureau of the Department of Labor, Washington, writes of a conference on Better Care for Mothers and Babies to be held in Washington, January 17 and 18. Its purpose is to formulate a program to reduce America's high rate of maternal and neo-natal infant mortality. . . . The Association for the Study of Negro Life and History tells us about its campaign to break down the barriers which confront the Negro scholar engaged in research, especially in the college towns of the South. . . . Clarence Chandler of Waco, Texas, writes of his enjoyment of Edmund Wilson's poem, "The Good Neighbor" (October 27). . . . The new picture magazine Rising Tide, according to Henry Stoner of Barberton, Ohio, must be included on the reading list for one's education in "polite humbuggery, smooth deception and incipient fascism."

W. Emerson of St. Petersburg, Florida, wants to know why, if the railroads are in such dire straits, they continue to pay enormous salaries to their high officials. . . . Otto Reimherr Jr., of Richmond Hill, New York, points out an error of fact in the editorial paragraph "The NLRB Breaks New Ground" (December 8). We said that the dissent of Edwin S. Smith in the Allis-Chalmers case was the first in the history of the body, But J. Warren Madden, chairman of the Board, wrote the first dissent to the opinion of his two colleagues in the M. H. Birge and Sons case, which was decided in favor of the United Wall Paper Crafts of North America in May, 1936.

What's on the Air?

President Roosevelt speaks at the Democratic National Committee Annual Jackson Day dinner and will be introduced by Postmaster General James A. Farley, Saturday, January 8, 9:30 P.M., CBS and NBC-Red Network.

The American School of the Air dramatizes problems the National Labor Relations Board has met in strike settlements, Monday, January 10, 2:30 P.M., CBS.

Robert P. Tristram Coffin speaks on "American Poetry," Tuesday, January 11, 2:30 P.M., CBS.

Senator Robert La Follette speaks on "How Can the Federal Budget Be Balanced?" a program in the America's Town Meeting of the Air series, Thursday, January 13, 9:30 P.M., NBC-Blue Network.

Musical programs of the week include the Metropolitan Opera Company's broadcast of Verdi's "Il Trovatore," Saturday, January 8, NBC-Blue Network; Arturo Toscanini conducting the NBC Symphony Orchestra, Saturday, January 8, 10 P.M., NBC-Blue Network; Georges Enesco directs and is the soloist with the New York Philharmonic-Symphony Society, Sunday, January 9, 3 P.M., CBS; and the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by José Iturbi, Thursday, January 13, 9 P.M., NBC-Blue Network.

All times given are Eastern Standard Time.

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BOOKS IN REVIEW

Red China

TO EDGAR SNOW goes the credit for what is perhaps the greatest single feat performed by any journalist of our century. He was the first foreign correspondent —with one or two exceptions he was the first foreigner of any sort—to enter Soviet China. With no exception whatever, he was the first foreigner to come back with a story. Later there would be other Americans who made their way into the same region: that was in the spring of 1937, during the truce that followed the Sian Mutiny. But Edgar Snow, coming first and coming alone, able to speak the language of the country—even the Chino-Marxist jargon of its leaders—and prepared with a thorough knowledge of Chinese politics, had already stayed there four months, campaigned with a Red army, played tennis and poker with the Red commanders, and then returned to Peiping with material for a book[1] as fresh and honest and illuminating as anything that has been written about the background of the war in the East.

In that war the Chinese Soviets are playing an important part. And yet, as Mr. Snow explains at some length, their material power has often been wildly exaggerated. It is not true, for example, that there were ever eighty or even thirty million Chinese living under a soviet government. The maximum population, in 1933, was nine million people, and these were scattered in six different soviet areas. It is not true that the Reds had a million men under arms. They had the men, perhaps, but not the arms; even at the height of their power they possessed no more than 200,000 rifles. It is not true that they subsisted on gifts of money and weapons from Russia. Perhaps they received a little money, through the Comintern, but very little; and the only weapons that ever reached them were captured from their enemies.

The wonder is that they held out for so many years, in the face of so many Red Bandit Extermination Campaigns. In the first of these, when they had only 30,000 rifles and very little ammunition, they met and defeated a White army of 100,000. In the second they defeated 200,000; in the third, 300,000 (but of course their own force was growing). The fourth Extermination Campaign, with 250,000 White troops, was the most disastrous for the Nanking government: the Reds destroyed or disarmed three White divisions; they took 13,000 prisoners after a single battle. But in general they tried to avoid pitched battles: their favorite tactics were those of guerilla warfare, as summed up in four maxims which every Red soldier had to learn by heart:

> Enemy advances; we retreat.
> Enemy encamps; we harass them.
> Enemy avoids battle; we attack.
> Enemy retreats; we pursue.

An army that fights by these unorthodox methods must live off the country and must be warned of every move that is made by the enemy. For success it depends on the loyalty of the civilian population. "Tactics are important," said P'eng Teh-huai, the commander of the Red First Front Army, "but we could not exist if the majority of the people did not support us." And that explains why the Reds not only escaped from being exterminated but even broadened their territory after each of the first four campaigns directed against them. By the autumn of 1933, the Central Soviet District in Kiangsi and Fukien Provinces was about the size of England; the Oyüwan Republic north of the Yangtze River was almost as large as Ireland. There were more than a thousand coöperatives in the Central District; there was a printing plant that employed eight hundred men; there was a big arsenal that manufactured cartridges and repaired captured weapons. But even so, the Soviets were not equipped for warfare on the modern scale. When General Chiang began his fifth Extermination Campaign, this time with a field army of 400,000 men and with another 500,000 held in reserve; when he surrounded all the Soviet territories with double and triple lines of fortification through which nothing could enter, not even salt; when he bombarded the Red cities with the fleet of 400 airplanes, then the Soviet leaders were faced with simple alternatives: they could either surrender or else retreat. They chose to retreat —not from Kiangsi Province alone, but from all six of the Soviet districts.

There followed the Long March to the northwest, an exploit probably unparalleled in military history. It began on the night of October 16, 1934, and lasted four days more than a year. During that time the Red armies covered 6,000 miles, at an average rate, not counting halts, of twenty-four miles a day, or twice the average speed of European infantry. They fought more than three hundred skirmishes and fifteen pitched battles; they crossed eighteen mountain ranges and twenty-four navigable rivers, besides pentrating districts inhabited by aboriginal tribesmen where no Chinese army had ever gone before. On October 20, 1935, with two-thirds of their original forces dead or left behind, but with their cadres still intact, they established a new Soviet Republic in Shensi.

Mr. Snow makes it quite clear that this new republic is not so populous or so flourishing as those they were forced to abandon. Its area last spring was about sixty thousand square miles—that is, it was a little smaller than New England—but the land was poor and famine-ridden and had less than two million inhabitants. It was defended by eighty or ninety thousand Red soldiers, half of whom were new recruits. There were no industries, except those the Communists had carried along with them, and there were no schools except those newly established; 95 percent of the population was illiterate. The chief advantage of the new territory was strategic—that is, it lay across the Japanese line of advance into Central Asia and it was only three hundred miles from Japanese Mongolia.

But although the material strength of the Chinese Soviets has been wildly exaggerated, their moral and political influence is greater than almost anyone has realized. Mr. Snow explains the reasons for the peculiar place they hold in Chinese history. All China, he says—or at least the articulate part of it—is more or less affected by socialist ideals. The Soviets are Chinese socialism in its most uncompromising form, and hence they have the prestige of those who carry any popular doctrine to its extremes. All China—including the Nanking government—is graft-ridden and torn with personal intrigues; the Chinese Communists have a

[1] Red Star Over China, by Edgar Snow. New York: Random House. 488 pages, illustrated. $3.

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bitterly won reputation for personal integrity and self-sacrifice. China is old, whereas the Red armies are young—the average age of the soldiers is nineteen and of the officers twenty-four, so that they seem to represent the future of the country. By means of exploits like the Long March, they have earned a place in Chinese legend beside the Good Bandits of the early dynasties. They have even assumed a magical character: thus, Mao Tse-tung can ward away bullets and Chu Teh, like a Taoist wizard, can summon a whirlwind of dust to hide him from his enemies. The White soldiers hate to fight against them and even the leaders are impressed. Young Marshal Chang had Red officers teaching in his military academy almost a year before the Sian Mutiny, at a time when he was supposed to be conducting a war of annihilation against them.

No matter what the reasons may be, it is a fact that the Communists have ended by imposing on the whole country their policies of national unity, of friendship with Russia and the Western democracies, of resistance to the death against Japan. They were not responsible for the Japanese war; that was a deliberate offensive by the Japanese army; but it was largely the triumph of the Communist policies that caused Japan to attack in 1937 instead of, let us say, 1940. Now that Chiang Kai-shek's modern armies have been defeated, it is the Communist tactic of guerilla warfare, "of maneuver over an extended, shifting and indefinite front," that has been adopted by the survivors; and the Red leaders are now represented in the Supreme War Council. If the war ends in a victory or even a stalemate—if Russia helps in a decisive way or if the Japanese people get tired of fighting—then the Chinese Reds will be national heroes. But in reading "Red Star Over China," one cannot forget that they have assumed a heavy responsibility, not merely for their own lives but for that of a whole nation.

MALCOLM COWLEY.

The New History

An Intellectual and Cultural History of the Western World, by Harry Elmer Barnes. New York: Random House. 1,270 pages. $5.

An Economic History of the Western World, by Harry Elmer Barnes. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company. 808 pages. $5.50.

A History of Historical Writing, by Harry Elmer Barnes. Norman: The University of Oklahoma Press. 451 pages. $3.50.

DR. BARNES is not a one-man encyclopedia by accident. He studied under James Harvey Robinson and is, today, the most vociferous exponent of the New History first expounded by that great teacher. Since the scope of the New History is nothing less than the reconstruction of the history of civilization in its totality, it becomes the task of the New Historian to ground himself in biology, archeology, anthropology, sociology, economics—as well as in history, old style. Barnes accepted that challenge. He went into the fray armed with an excellent mind, an uncanny memory, a genius for organization and a remarkable capacity for hard work. Examination of his latest books leads many, myself among them, to believe that he has succeeded in qualifying himself for his enormous task. Others, more skeptical, will admit the extent of his learning but will question its depth. This reaction is understandable in anyone turning the pages of these surveys, because so much is referred to which cannot, because of the limitations of space, be expanded. And the style is as typical of the ingenious bluffer as of the scholar with absolute mastery of his material.

Nevertheless, what must be conceded without dispute is his thorough acquaintance with the vast literature. In the social sciences, and to a considerable extent in the physical sciences, every book, article and paragraph—as well as many speeches and unpublished manuscripts!—new or old, by the great or by the small, is known to him. Let the student put together the footnote references and the bibliographies at the end of every chapter and he can rest assured that he will have a list from which no important or useful source of information has been omitted. (Ten years ago I was a student of Dr. Barnes's at the old New School for Social Research. I can testify personally to the fact that no request for a bibliography was ever answered unsatisfactorily.) He is an omnivorous reader, he never forgets, and he shows excellent critical judgment in the selection of the material which he incorporates into his own text.

In 1935 Dr. Barnes published his two-volume "History of Western Civilization," a solid block of 2,000 pages. The first of his 1937 crop of books, "An Intellectual and Cultural History of the Western World," is admittedly a chip off that block; the second, "An Economic History of the Western World," is another chip, but with added material and a different emphasis; the third, "A History of Historical Writing," is a new book. To many people, any work which "covers" in one volume the economic or intellectual history of man from the pre-historic period to the present day must of necessity be unsatisfactory. But that view, however valid, is beside the point. Such one and two-volume works do exist. There is a growing number of them. They are in demand in the colleges. The question is how do these by Dr. Barnes compare with the others?

My own feeling is that they accomplish their purpose better than any others in existence today. One reason is plain. Barnes is less concerned with original interpretation than, say, Wells or Van Loon. His primary concern is with organization of the relevant material. He borrows freely and wisely from the work of the best scholars. The result is that he is more accurate. Give chapters from Wells or Van Loon to experts in the field and they will writhe with pain at the inaccuracies, omissions, distortions. Give chapters from Barnes to these same experts and they will acknowledge that within the limitations of space the job is well done, dependable, balanced. As a matter of fact, Barnes takes the precaution of insuring himself against error—he submits his chapters in manuscript to various scholars and makes his corrections before publication.

The new book, "The History of Historical Writing," is a valuable survey and evaluation of the works of the major historians, the schools of historical thought and the relation of the historical literature of every age to its parent culture. It is especially useful to advanced students and writers of history. Unfortunately, some of the best precepts in this book fell on the deaf ears of the author himself. As a result, several important contradictions occur between what the author says about historical writing and what he does. One of these contradictions is basic:

> [From "The History of Historical Writing."] Modern psychology has completely undermined the assumptions of those who uphold the ideals of complete historical objectivity. It has shown that no truly excellent piece of intellectual work can be executed without real interest and firm convictions . . . the fetish of historical "facts" basic in the underlying assumptions of the erudite school, will not stand the test of critical analysis . . . in general, we make of a historical fact essentially what we put into it as a result of our subjective imagi-

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nation. The naïve assumption of many historians that there are historical facts lying about in profusion in our collections of historical sources is actually an animistic vestige.

These are things which Dr. Barnes knows to be true. But see what he sets out to do, according to the preface to his "Economic History of the Western World":

> A consistent effort has been made to let the dominant and cogent facts of material progress tell their own story, basing the organization and interpretation of the abundant materials upon the historical data themselves rather than upon any rigid or dogmatic philosophy of history. But there has been no evasion of the responsibilities imposed by a sincere regard for the facts. . . . The judgments of the author are not infallible, but no fair reader can contend that they have been forged by bias or tempered by expediency.

In this particular contradiction between his theory and practice, the most serious limitation of Dr. Barnes's work is revealed. By his own argument, he stands convicted of the charge that in him there still remains the "animistic vestige" which he ridicules so effectively. He seems to think that it is enough to broaden the scope of history. The old political and military "facts" were not adequate? Let us, then, include many other facts from fields related to history. Next, let the facts "tell their own story." What nonsense! Dr. Barnes has pointed out rightly that the facts selected and the story they tell depend upon the author's "real interest and firm convictions." They depend upon his angle of vision. The historian who thinks out clearly his real interest and firm convictions arrives at a philosophy of history. The historian who doesn't is in the position of never having admitted, even to himself, the influence of his own "subjective imagination." Dr. Barnes is such a historian. What he seriously lacks is a reasoned philosophy of history.

Repeatedly he asserts, and with truth, that to be a historian worthy of the name is to be more than "a compiling clerk who gathers the facts from a diversity of sources. He is, rather, the one who takes this raw material, evaluates it, and organizes it in such a fashion as to illuminate our minds with respect to the nature of the past and the manner in which the past has produced the present." This, I suggest, is what Dr. Barnes does not succeed in doing. More, let any historian attempt to do it, let any historian adopt a hypothesis that gives sense and coherence to the past, let any historian attempt to make clear the movement of history, and Dr. Barnes leaps upon him as a dogmatist guilty of selecting and forcing the facts to suit his interpretation. That is the substance of his attack on the Marxists. The Marxist historians, he says, look upon Marx as their Bible; they do not consult and profit from the works of later historians; they twist the facts to fit their set mold.

Now these familiar charges are to be expected from people ignorant of the history of historical writing; there is no excuse for them from Dr. Barnes who has himself argued so convincingly that no one can approach history without a point of view, and that historical facts *per se* do not exist. Dr. Barnes must acknowledge that the Marxist historian need not distort history any more than the non-Marxist, or indeed, any more than he himself does by his method of showing us all the threads but never tying them together into a recognizable pattern. Dr. Barnes must admit that the Marxist historian need not be more prejudiced than any other historian; that the Marxist historian need not be less ardent in his search for truth than any other historian. To deny these things is to deny, for example, that Louis Hacker's history of the United States is as accurate as James Truslow Adams', or that Max Lerner's interpretation of the Supreme Court is as honest as Charles Warren's, or that Harold Laski's history of the rise of liberalism is as true as Harry Elmer Barnes's. On the Marxist level, as on the non-Marxist, a historian may be good or bad. Dr. Barnes has every right to attack a historian because he is bad, but not because he has a reasoned philosophy.

It is because certain historians believe with Dr. Barnes that "the contributions which it may make to the better understanding of our own age is the chief, if not the only real service of history," that they become Marxist historians. For to be a Marxist means simply to be convinced that history is not chaotic, but that it conforms to a definite pattern of discoverable laws; to be a Marxist is to make use of a tested scientific tool for the understanding of the historic process.

Dr. Barnes is today one of the ablest of the "let the facts speak for themselves" historians. If and when he achieves an organizing philosophy of history, he should become a better historian. If that philosophy turns out to be Marxist then he will be, to my mind at least, a still better historian.

LEO HUBERMAN.

Talent to Order

American Stuff: An Anthology of Prose and Verse by members of the Federal Writers' Project: with sixteen prints by the Federal Art Project. New York: The Viking Press. 318 pages. $2.

THIS COLLECTION is an effort to give the more creative aspects of writing done by WPA workers a chance to be known. As Mr. Alsberg, the national director, explains in the preface, the caliber of the WPA writers as creative artists cannot easily be demonstrated, since their creative writing is done exclusively in their leisure, and since, if it has the possibility for commercial publication, it is not likely to be turned over to the government. But even in the present collection a curious—and I think hopeful—thing has happened: that part of the writing which has arisen out of the peculiar opportunities offered by the Writers' Project is on the whole more significant than that which has been the result of free activity. For it is in the Americana in this collection, in the folk sayings, the Negro convict songs and the Negro market cries, the square-dance calls and the legends of mutiny, that one sees these American writers coming close to the heart of their people. One remembers the part that was played in Ibsen's life by a government subvention that brought him into close contact with the folk-life of Norway and gave him eventually the impulse to create his greatest play, "Peer Gynt"; and one wonders if in years to come we may not look for a deepening of American literature precisely through these special opportunities and demands.

In general, we are a little too self-conscious, a little too demanding about the creative act; and it is no reproach whatever against the Writers' Project that it has diverted novelists and poets from the free play of their fantasy to tasks that have involved a different kind of discipline. In the long run, this apprenticeship, this seeing of the American scene, this listening to the American voice, may mean more for literature than any sudden forcing of stories and poems. And it is as a hint and promise of what is yet to come that one especially welcomes "American Stuff."

LEWIS MUMFORD.

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Their Stories

Last Flight, by Amelia Earhart. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company. 246 pages. $2.50.

THERE was good sense in Amelia Earhart's decision to send back piecemeal reports of her flight along the way. Because of their spontaneity, these penciled scribblings from her log book reveal her more faithfully than might a formal biography. From them emerge the familiar boyish figure in shirt and slacks, tinkering with greasy propellers or laying down stakes for a home-made runway; the impressionable sightseer taking time off in the cockpit to discover the loveliness of a Pacific dawn and the exotic greens of tropic islands; the First Lady of the air trying to prove to the world that woman's capabilities are on a par with man's. The impulses behind her flights appear even more significantly. She states quite frankly that she could hardly wait to fly from Mexico City to New York because Wiley Post had advised against the needless dangers involved; she also indicates that her round-the-world jaunt was undertaken simply as a stunt—a stunt that destroyed two valuable lives and an $80,000 "flying laboratory."

What of course cannot ever be made clear are the causes of the crack-up, though it is pretty well established that Miss Earhart's failure to radio her location regularly and her lack of sufficient equipment for direction-finding must share the responsibility with the weather. Anne Lindbergh used to talk of the "back stairs" to flying magic—the sextant or snake-bite serum or radio tube or even the heavy boots. I don't feel like blaming Amelia Earhart now for neglecting them. But I can't help wishing that her talent for living dangerously and richly had been devoted to more productive fields, where it might have lost some of its unnecessary hazards but none of its vigor or magnificent daring.

MIRIAM BORGENICHT.

Pepita, by V. Sackville-West. New York: Doubleday, Doran and Company. 316 pages. $3.

V. SACKVILLE-WEST presents her grandmother, the Spanish dancer Pepita, daughter of an old-clothes hawker, as the skeleton in the cupboard of one of England's greatest houses. But being a family skeleton and the center of a romantic legend does not necessarily make one's life interesting reading. Despite the author's painstaking research, Pepita is merely a carefully reconstructed legend.

But when Pepita's illegitimate daughter, who became chatelaine of Knole by marrying her cousin Lord Sackville, takes the stage halfway through the book, the whole tone of writing changes. Overstudied chronicling gives way to that instinctive selection of detail which alone creates character. Lady Sackville was one of those women who start out in life with everything—beauty, wit, charm, wealth—but who, for the lack of some integrating force, never accomplish anything in spite of their overpowering personalities. "*The* most wonderful person I have ever known," Kipling wrote. Though she is revealed mostly through a series of fantastic episodes, V. Sackville-West understood so well the thwarted impulses back of the old lady's eccentricities that the portrait is more touching than humorous. Wrapped in furs she dined on the terrace of Knole in the snow, in artificial light, because she had suddenly discovered the merits of fresh air. She patriotically helped the National Debt by writing "to all and sundry" for as many pennies as they were old. Yet, surprisingly for such an extremist, she retained a sense of humor about her absurdities. "Tiresome, troublesome, generous, lavish, unjust, she was truer to herself than anyone I have ever known," V. Sackville-West writes of her on the last page of "Pepita." And this unconventional determination to be herself gave her real charm and makes her considerably more than just an eccentric. V. Sackville-West has kept a delicate balance. Detached enough to see her mother's faults in their true perspective—and indeed she was often their victim—she was at the same time passionately fond of her. And this mixed approach gives the portrait the breath of life.

NORMA MCCARTY.

Unfinished Journey, by Jack Jones. New York: The Oxford University Press. 303 pages. $3.

THOUGH Jones was born in a derelict mining region of Wales, worked in the pits for a few shillings, has been on the dole time and again, and helped launch the British Communist Party and the General Strike of 1926, his account of his life is so genial, so devoid of bitterness or protest that he seems to emerge almost without convictions. After the War Jones drifted into politics to see if oratory could help the workers. He somersaulted hopefully through the Communist, Labor, Liberal and Mosley Fascist parties, taking whatever jobs were offered. Yet he ended up on the dole as a non-political individualist, less disillusioned than content to mind his business and let Mr. Baldwin mind the country's. The early chapters of his book form a telling picture of the Rhondda Valley miners in their half-tragic, half-whimsical daily life, the disasters and sentiments revealed in salty prose and dialogue. But Jones describes their mass poverty with no more resentment than he shows toward Ramsay MacDonald; all the way through his Welsh heart was too brimful of love.

J. B.

Hollywood Through the Back Door, by E. Nils Holstius. New York: Longmans, Green. 316 pages. $2.50.

Taking Chances: A Record of Adventure, by Neal Harman. New York: Farrar and Rinehart. 273 pages. $2.50.

THESE two records of experience have in common the fact that each is by an Englishman who, finding life in Britain unbearably dull, sought a more colorful existence in "the States." In the first, the director of a large phonograph company and author of several popular books decides that he will not be happy until he has become a screen writer, and that, to do this properly, he must go to Hollywood and live in its back streets until he learns what makes it go round. In an uninspired, British-lecturer-for-the-first-time-in-America-manner, Mr. Holstius describes his brief experimental sojourn with Hollywood's forgotten lower class. When, however, he finds himself making no progress toward his literary goal, he gradually reveals his identity to the score or so of screen stars whom he had apparently known very intimately in London. Thereafter he shuttles with remarkable ingenuousness between the pretended poverty of his furnished room and regular celebrations in Hollywood's night spots. His experiences confirm the standard picture of Hollywood; but what might have been the painful drama of his failure is made pointless by the fact that waiting patiently in London was a double career as £2,500-a-year executive and popular novelist.

The less said about "Taking Chances" the better. It is inferior brand of Halliburton by a young Englishman who never knew when he was well off. His wanderings led him through what purport to be "adventures" but seem to be only such difficulties as any rash and very aimless person might run into. The account itself is disjointed, rambling and without the saving grace of enthusiasm.

M. R.

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Three Novels

Forever Ulysses, by C. P. Rodocanachi. Translated by Patrick Leigh-Fermor. New York: The Viking Press. $2.50.

BOTH PUBLISHER and author say that the subject of this odyssey is patterned after no living or historical person. But the late Sir Basil Zaharoff was born in Asia Minor and, after mysterious adventures in Constantinople, rose to the top of his chosen career. Mr. Rodocanachi's hero was born on an island near Corfu and saw many goodly states and kingdoms before his career duplicated that of the famous merchant of death. At seven young Ulysses was polishing shoes on the sidewalks of Athens; at ten he was serving as busboy to an Alexandrine dealer in hasheesh and general groceries, brilliantly enlarging the business and piously taking his cut on every transaction. At twenty he was on his way to becoming the foremost adviser —while still a prisoner—of the fanatic Mahdi whom Kitchener later annihilated at Khartoum, with the aid of this same Ulysses.

Having saved his skin and feathered his nest, a millionaire in his middle thirties and a bankrupt at forty, Ulysses landed in the United States and made a second fortune in cigarettes before becoming the mysterious puppet-master of the munitions industry. But it is the early career of the clever trader with which the novel is chiefly concerned; and it is this section of the book—the bare life on the Greek islands, the sponge divers, Alexandrine chicanery, Africa with Chinese Gordon and the Mahdi—and a final Socratic dialogue between the realistic Greek and his French, English and new-Greek secretaries, that make Mr. Rodocanachi's book the distinguished piece of entertainment it is. The early adventures of Ulysses would not be out of place in the Arabian Nights; the reflections of the author on the eternal spirit of Greece give the entire narrative the spice that enlivens many of his native dishes. The whole sums up to an epic of rascality and polish in the grand manner. But the closing scenes—especially after the anti-climax of the war years—should make the book a modern, if minor, classic.

QUINCY HOWE.

War with the Newts, by Karel Capek. New York: G. P. Putman's Sons. $2.50.

IN THIS new fantasy Mr. Capek once again gives vent to his mild and rather pleasant obsession with the weakness of mankind and its institutions. It is an agreeable tale, with more fun than wit, and with a good preachy element that fills the world with original sin and sets both author and reader just far enough above it. One gets a tingle of satisfaction from this, and also from seeing one's worst fears realized in such grotesque and obedient shape.

The newts, about a yard high and "not above average intelligence," appear first as under-water devils, discovered by a Captain van Toch near the island of Tanah Masa. The Captain teaches these men-lizards to talk and to bring him pearls. The newts begin to swarm Europe. They are used to excavate harbors, fill in islands, etc., and, by Mr. Capek, as a cartoon of the frailties of man, who now has a new virgin creature on which to impose his faults: education, armament, clothing, communism. Great Britain, sensing the danger, closes her seacoast to the newts (this does not apply to the Dominions) and X writes a much discussed warning, but with no effect. The newts, having developed a "pure male solidarity," drive the last of the human race up into the mountains.

The story is consistent in its fashion, but its effect is hardly what it is blurbed to be. In spite of its many prods and pokings, the book is, of course, a soporific, working on one like a reversion to childhood where all real obligations are once more removed. And for all one's pleasure in this sort of thing, it is impossible not to recognize that Mr. Capek's "genius" for it (*cf.* jacket) is actually a form of creative and moral impotence in no way unique these days, taking the usual pattern: exaggeration of disaster, making arrested motion almost an asset, plus a certain sprightly cynicism designed to keep the heart beating while we wait.

ELEANOR CLARK.

Museum, by James L. Phelan. New York: William Morrow and Company. $2.50.

THIS is called a novel: actually it is a document in penology; and there is no other document I know which better communicates the entire slow horror of incarceration than this account of how a life sentence was served in two English jails. There is no imaginative power in Mr. Phelan's book, either in style or situation. By a method of unremitting realism he presents the tedious terrors of jailed life, wherein day after day, month after month, year after year repeat themselves with unvarying monotony like the links in a chain. For the "lifer" there is no hope, no future. At times he passes from passive brooding to a berserk fit of "smashing," and the other convicts listen in their cells to "the smash of glass and the jangling clatter of hurtling tinware, accompanied all the time by a frenzied, bestial howling and the dull rhythmic thumping of a soft body beating against a cell door. . . ." "Museum" is apparently an autobiographical account of Mr. Phelan's personal experiences, all the more authentic because he makes no attempt to criticize the penal system under which he suffered.

M. S.

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New Books: A Reader's List

MAINE: A GUIDE "DOWN EAST," written and compiled by the Federal Writers' Project (Houghton Mifflin; $2.50). The fourth in the New England group of American Guide Series, with introductory material about historical background, commerce, education and geography for the student; and nineteen well mapped and guided trips for the sportsman and traveler. Readable type, good photographs and comprehensive index.

JEAN SIBELIUS: HIS LIFE AND PERSONALITY, by Karl Ekman (Knopf; $3). A eulogy of the Finnish composer. Not a critical analysis, or the definitive biography, by any means; but the most complete record to date of the sources and development of Sibelius' work.

BAGHDAD SKETCHES, by Freya Stark (Dutton; $3.50). Arabian Nights—and days—as lived by a traveler with less than the "required" pound a day and by natives who are not caliphs.

YOU HAVE SEEN THEIR FACES, by Erskine Caldwell and Margaret Bourke-White (Modern Age Books; 75 cents. A re-issue of the $5 edition in paper covers, with text and pictures intact. In the fifty-four-page edition the photographs have been bled slightly so that more pictures will fit fewer pages, and the text is run in with them. The reproduction is less good but print and paper are excellent, and Robert Josephy's make-up is even superior to the original—a fine job of book-making.

Contributors

MAURICE HALPERIN is at work on a book describing conditions in Mexico during recent years.

ERNEST HEMINGWAY'S most recent book is "To Have and Have Not," published this fall. He has been in Spain, the scene of much of his earlier writing, during a large part of the civil war as newspaper correspondent.

ELLA WINTER, a graduate of, and former tutor in, the London School of Economics, has spent the past few years investigating and writing about the labor situation in California. She is the author of "Red Virtue."

GILBERT H. BURCK is an editor of Railroad Magazine and is an occasional contributor to other periodicals.

MURIEL RUKEYSER'S poem in this issue will appear in her new book, "US1," a January publication of Covici, Friede.

JEANNE MCGAHEY, a native of western Oregon, won the Emily Chamberlain Cook poetry prize at the University of California.

LEO HUBERMAN is the author of "We, the People," "Man's Worldly Goods" and "The Labor Spy Racket." He is now working on a history of the trade-union movement in the United States.

LEWIS MUMFORD'S new book, "The Culture of Cities," will be published early this year by Harcourt, Brace.

MIRIAM BORGENICHT is a recent graduate of Barnard College who is now free-lancing in New York City.

NORMA MCCARTY has been writing articles in England, where she has been living for the past four years.

QUINCY HOWE, an editor for the publishing house of Simon and Schuster, is completing two short books—one "A Handbook of World Politics," the other a study of Anglo-American relations.

ELEANOR CLARK was associate editor with Horace Gregory of "New Letters in America," published by W. W. Norton and Company.

The initials signed to the brief reviews are those of James Broughton, Milton Rugoff and Michael Sayers.

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